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The Faith of the Crescent.  
★ ★ By J. Takle ★ ★



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THE  
FAITH OF THE CRESCENT



# The Faith of the Crescent

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BY

JOHN TAKLE

*Missionary, Bengal*

*Honorary Secretary*

'Missionaries to Muslims League'

Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds !

The Compassionate, the Merciful !

The King of the Day of Reckoning

Thee only do we worship and to Thee  
do we cry for help.

*Sûratu'l-Fâtiha (i) 1-4.*

'The Association Press'

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National Council of the Young Men's Christian  
Associations of India and Ceylon  
86 College Street, Calcutta  
1913



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TO MY WIFE

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## PREFACE

FOR the last quarter of a century the Muslim peoples have been prominently before the world. Politically they have been sore troubled. The Súdán, Morocco, Persia and Turkey have been shaken by mighty movements, the end of which is not yet. Their shaking was our waking, and now there is a keen desire on the part of missionaries and thoughtful laymen to know something about Islám, the faith of the followers of Muḥammad.

This book is written at the request of Mr. A. C. Harte of the Young Men's Christian Association. It is designed primarily to give the members of the Association some knowledge of the salient points of Islám, and first appeared serially in *The Young Men of India*.

Being an evangelistic missionary, working in the midst of the illiterate Muslim swamp dwellers of Eastern Bengal, my method of describing Islám may be found to be more practical than scholastic. During the seventeen years I have spent in trying to present the truth to our Muslim brethren, many difficulties have been presented; these I have kept in mind feeling that the reader would wish to have not merely an outline of the Faith, but also hints that would be of help in any possible talks concerning Islám and Christianity.

There is much in Muḥammad and his system that is true and praiseworthy and it is our bounden duty to see that this is given its rightful place, but there is also that which saddens the heart of every lover of God and truth. The quotations from the Qur'án are from Rodwell's translation, which a recognized Arabic scholar, Professor Margoliouth, considers to be 'one of the best that have as yet been produced. It seems to a great extent to carry with it the atmosphere in which Muḥammad lived, and its sentences are imbued with the flavour of the East.'

As to the title : it is clear that the Saracens took the sign of the Crescent from the Byzantine Empire, adopting it as the symbol of their faith. A study of the sources of the light of Islám, in their special relationship to Old and New Testament truth, should convince any one that a more appropriate sign could not have been adopted by them.

Having the fullest faith in the future fulfilment of prophecy and relying on the promise of a covenant-keeping God we can say with Shelley :—

The moon of Muḥammad  
Arose, and it shall set :  
While, blazoned as on Heaven's immortal noon,  
The Cross leads generations on.

JOHN TAKLE

BRAHMANBARIA,  
*September*, 1913.



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## THE ELEMENT OF TRUTH

This truth and that truth cannot be all true,  
And yet all of them are not entirely astray in error.  
Because error occurs not without some truth,  
Fools buy base coins from their likeness to real coins.  
If there were no genuine coins current in the world,  
How could coiners succeed in passing false coins ?  
If there were no truth, how could falsehood exist ?  
Falsehood derives its plausibility from truth.  
'Tis the desire of right that makes men buy wrong ;  
Let poison be mixed with sugar, and they eat it at once.  
If wheat were not valued as sweet and good for food,  
The cheat who shows wheat and sells barley would make  
no profit !  
Say not, then, that all these creeds are false,  
The false ones ensnare hearts by the scent of truth.  
Say not that they are all erroneous fancies,  
There is no fancy in the universe without some truth.  
Jalálu'd-Dín, *Mathnavi-i-Ma'navi* (Whinfield's Trans-  
lation, p. 98.) Book II, Story xi.



# The Faith of the Crescent

## CHAPTER I

### THE FACT OF ISLÁM

SCARCELY twelve centuries have gone since a small band of men of the Arab race presented themselves at the court of the Christian king of Abyssinia and begged of him protection. Calling the bishops around him the Negus listened sympathetically to the story the refugees had to tell. Being persecuted in their home at Mecca their religious teacher had advised them to go to Abyssinia, which, he had told them, was 'a land of righteousness, wherein no man was wronged.'

And who was their teacher? They then related in the most affecting manner how they had lived lives of ignorance, idolatry and falsehood; how that but five years before a new prophet had arisen from among themselves and had given them a new conception of religion; that his name was Muḥammad, 'a man of noble birth and blameless life, who has shown us by infallible signs proof of his mission, and has taught us to cast away idols, and to worship the only true God. He has commanded us to abstain from all sin, to keep faith, to observe the times of fasting and prayer and to follow after virtue. We believed him and followed him, but our countrymen persecuted us and tortured us, and tried



to cause us to forsake our religion. And now we throw ourselves upon thy protection. Wilt thou not protect us?’

Then the secret was out. For at least three years the new prophet had, to use the words of his biographers, ‘concealed’ his faith and invited men to join it ‘secretly’. For this he has been blamed. True, it showed great diffidence and timidity, but it always requires great moral courage to proclaim a new idea to one’s own countrymen when it runs contrary to their accepted beliefs and practices, and when people are of an unrelenting, uncontrollable disposition.

Islām had but small beginnings. The influence of the new teacher had reached but a few in his own immediate circle, but those were a strength to him. His first converts were his own wife, a slave, a cousin and a cloth merchant, who had been his support at a very critical time. He was thus encouraged to proceed. Numbers increased, persecution also increased. Ibn Ishāq says in his *Life of Muḥammad*: ‘The Quraish showed themselves hostile to those who believed in Muḥammad, each clan rising up against the weak Muslims who were in their midst. These were shut up, beaten with stripes, had to suffer hunger and thirst, and were exposed to the sun, so that many of them relinquished their faith to escape from ill-treatment, whilst others were strengthened by God to persevere.’<sup>1</sup> He further says that Muḥammad himself was not exempted, for when he went out one day in the town ‘there was no man, either free or slave, who, on passing him, did not call him a liar and insult him.’ Further, ‘he allowed himself to be abused, to be spit upon, to

<sup>1</sup> Koelle, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, p. 88.

have dust thrown upon him, and to be dragged out of the temple by his own turban fastened to his neck.' <sup>1</sup>

The converts at last feeling that their Prophet's life was in danger kept two swift camels in readiness for him and a companion to flee at a moment's notice. But where was he to flee to? To go in certain directions would have meant certain death to himself and the ruin of the cause he had at heart. But he had friends. There were those in Madína, 250 miles distant, who, when marketing in Mecca, had heard his message and then cordially invited him to come to their city. He went, and it proved to be the salvation of Islám. Brave men rallied round him, drew the sword on his behalf, and swept on thereafter to victory after victory. Like magic, tribes, that before had been ready to annihilate him, swore allegiance and then poured forth to subdue the world.

Islám had phenomenal success. The Faith spread like a prairie fire and nothing could stay it. No sooner had Arabia yielded than Muḥammad looked with longing eyes beyond the border and addressed formal letters, stamped with a seal specially made for the occasion, to a number of neighbouring potentates. He summoned them to accept Islám, and, while his summons received scant courtesy, it was not long before they were glad to yield.

When we think of the success of the new Faith in the first thirty years of its existence we know of nothing to compare with it in the history of religion, for within that short period not only did Arabia come under the

<sup>1</sup> Ṭabarí, quoted in Elphinstone's *History of India*, p. 256.

sway of Islám, but Syria, Palestine, Persia, Egypt and Northern Africa had to give way before the fanatical zeal of the predatory herdsmen who from time to time joined the ranks of the faithful. Famous cities like Jerusalem, Damascus, Alexandria and Carthage—centres of Christian influence and learning—they forced to capitulate, and either demolished the cathedrals and churches or turned them into mosques, so great was their passion for one God, one prophet and one book.

‘The naked Derar,’ says Emerson, ‘horsed upon an idea, was found an overmatch for Roman cavalry.’

From Africa, Islám leapt across to Europe, and Spain yielded to the onward sweep, and who knows but that the whole of British and European history might have been different if it had not been for brave Charles, Duke of Austrasia. Having conquered Spain, the Muslim hordes cast their eyes further north for new lands to conquer and new fields to burn or plunder. They were determined that:—

the subject West  
Should bow in reverence to Muḥammad’s name ;  
And pilgrims from remotest Arctic shores  
Tread with religious feet the burning sands  
Of Araby and Mecca’s stony soil.

Crossing the Pyrenees, they pushed along leaving many a ruined church and abbey and palace to mark their plunderous way, but they had not reckoned with Duke Charles, who earned his knightly surname of Martel, or the ‘Hammer.’ With his fine body of Frankish troops, taught in many a German campaign, he was able to break the edge of the scimitar—a weapon whose shape is that of the Crescent itself—to whose power the religion of the Crescent owed its early light-

ning advance. On a plain between Tours and Poitiers he at once, and we trust for ever, stayed the wave of invasion in Western Europe.

Islám's home is Asia. There it has a more congenial sphere of activity. China, Afghanistan, India, Java, the Malay Archipelago were all invaded with more or less success, and we find Mongol, Aryan and Dravidian becoming Semitic in everything but physical appearance.

Then crossing from Syria to Constantinople, the Rome of the Byzantine Empire, Muslims were soon scaling its walls to the yells of 'Victory to Islám,' staining the streets with the blood of the descendants of Christian Constantine, and, desecrating San Sofia, said by Ferguson to be 'the most perfect and most beautiful place of worship ever erected by any Christian people.' It is now a mosque, and daily rows upon rows of Muḥammadans stand to pray within its walls, making the great dome ring with the Arabic watchwords of Alláh, Islám and Muḥammad. In order that there might be no misunderstanding concerning the conversion of the building to Islám, Murád III had it surmounted with a crescent 150 feet in diameter, which was gilded at enormous expense.<sup>1</sup>

Another attempt was made to bring Europe under the dominion of Muḥammad in 1683, but this time the hordes of the desert met Sobieski, whom the Turks called the 'Wizard,' and at the very gates of Vienna they were doomed to defeat. But here, as well as at Tours, it was the Lord's doing. He had interposed,

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopædia of Islám*, p. 526.

and Sobieski was Christian enough to recognize this, for, when sending the standard of the Muslim army to the Pope, he sent this message, '*I came, I saw, God hath conquered*'—an appropriate amendment of the famous Roman laconism.

There are certain points to be noted in regard to the advance of Islám—political conquest has not always meant the conversion of people. Dr. Zwemer says: 'The most remarkable fact in the spread of Islám is that political sway was not altogether synonymous with religious conversion. When Islám triumphed in Asia Minor, Christianity was dominant among the peoples speaking Greek, Armenian and Syriac, and these peoples, after twelve centuries of contact and conflict with Islám, are still Christian. The spread of Islám was not wholly a triumph. The victory more than once remained to the vanquished, and Islám often failed to win allegiance where it won subjection.'<sup>1</sup>

While this is true of lands where Christians were stayed by strong conviction, Islám has been successful to a remarkable degree in bringing in millions of pagans within the fold, altogether apart from political conquest and its many methods of plunder and coercion. To plunder is still the profession of Bedouins and brigands, but its practice is confined to the desert and desolate places. To force men to believe at the point of the sword, once so common, is now almost rare, and, perhaps, without the power of using the sword, Islám has had more substantial success than with it, for there are elements in its teaching that attract the average Asiatic.

<sup>1</sup>.Zwemer, *Islám*, p. 61.



I. *Its Attractiveness.*—Islám has an attractiveness in that it links together things spiritual and carnal. In its simple creed it has a proportion of truth that appeals, and it enjoins rules for prayer, fasting and almsgiving that encourage the universal idea of primitive peoples that some mechanical means must be adopted for the purpose of accumulating merit for the soul. But with the measure of truth, which undoubtedly helps man's inner spirit, there are linked carnal ideas that have debased the minds and hearts of millions of the human race. In a word, the religion is made up of God and Muḥammad.

How different is the teaching of the Apostle Paul. With him there was a constant war in progress between the spirit, or, as he sometimes called it, 'the inward man'—his higher nature and the lower, which he designated 'the flesh.'<sup>1</sup> In conflict the flesh so often proved to be the stronger. 'I see a different law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members.'<sup>2</sup> 'The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other.'<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it is easier to be 'servants of sin' than 'servants of righteousness.' But Muḥammad in his faith, doubtless as a method of expediency and worldly policy, joined together what Christianity had taught should be kept asunder. Afterwards we may prove this. Suffice it at present to say that the plurality of wives, concubinage and slavery, in both this world and the next, were inducements held out by divine favour to all who would follow in the

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 13. <sup>2</sup> Rom. vii. 23. <sup>3</sup> Gal. v. 17.

way of the Prophet, and they were too alluring for the average man, unlearned in Christian truth, not to accept. It was not character that Alláh demanded of men, and sin was but to perform the rites and ceremonies inaccurately, let the intention be ever so good. The mind or motive did not count; the strict observance of ritual was everything.

II. *Its Aggressiveness.*—Islám is the second most powerful missionary religion in the world to-day. We almost said the first. Certainly it is first in countries like Africa where the Muslim trader, or the Darwesh mendicant born in the East, act the missionary better than any trained in the colleges of the West. He can wander from village to village in the jungles and other places quite impossible for the European missionary of the Christian Faith. The Muslim trader or camel-driver or mendicant may not be able to read or write or preach, but he knows the watchword of Islám: '*Lá iláha illa'lláhu; Muḥammadu'r-Rasúlu'lláh.*'—There is no god but God; Muḥammad is the Apostle of God. He also knows his prayer-drill. He goes through his routine of prayer five times a day by the roadside, and the African savage watching him is impressed, and soon joins the trader in his devotions. Through the efforts of these traders there are now twenty or thirty mosques in some African towns where a decade ago there were only three or four.

And the singular thing is this: British influence and government are helping Islám to an extraordinary degree. Formerly, the scourge of Africa was the iniquitous slave trader, and he was the only conception of Islám that the pagan tribes knew anything of. The

result was that Islám became a spectre to be dreaded, but with the suppression of the slave traffic the feeling of hatred has been lessened, especially since the bridge-builders, railway workers, soldiers and teachers sent by the Government are of the Muḥammadan persuasion. And by the railways, roads, schools and good government, the British have brought in many a convenience to enable the representatives of Islám to push speedily into the pagan territory to win the pagan mind.

There is no time like the present for Christian missions to go in and flood the whole of Africa with Christian light. It was the opinion of the great Missionary Conferences held in Edinburgh and Lucknow that 'Africa is the region upon which our present efforts must be chiefly concentrated to meet the advance of Islám.'<sup>1</sup>

In India, Egypt and Japan the Muslim propaganda is being pushed forward on more intelligent lines by direct appeals to the intelligence, by education and by the distribution of literature got up in the style of Christian books. Even the Qur'án has been bound in morocco leather and made in style and size to appear like the Christian's Bible. Carlyle's 'Muḥammad the Prophet-Hero' and such like extravagant utterances of pro-Muslim writers have been printed and distributed and are in great demand, and in India alone there are several newspapers and magazines issued weekly and monthly for the purpose of combating the Christian Faith.

III. *Its Solidarity*.—Muslims will deny themselves and sacrifice almost everything for their faith. They

<sup>1</sup> Lucknow Conference Report, 1911, p. 37.

may be interested in their country, but their creed comes first. They are always on the watch to see that nothing endangers that. In every matter brought up for consideration the great question with them is, 'How does it affect the Faith?' No doubt this spirit is fostered by the idea that in Islám all belong to one big brotherhood where there is no caste, no Brahmins and no priests.

Another thing that strengthens the bond of unity in Islám is the annual pilgrimage to the sacred cities of Mecca and Madína. If we could watch the pilgrims *en route* to these two cities at the time of the Hajj we should count, perhaps, one hundred thousand persons who had come from all parts of the Torrid Zone; a more motley stream of races it would be scarcely possible to imagine. We should see Moorish chieftains on beautiful horses, Bedouin sheiks from beyond the Jordan, Kurdish warriors from the hills of Armenia, desert-rangers on racing dromedaries, Indian Begums and bands of the faithful from China, Afghanistan, Persia, Baluchistan, the Malay Peninsula and many other places too numerous to mention. Although, unable to converse together, yet the enthusiasm of the pilgrims is said to be indescribable when they enter the holy place and hear their sacred shibboleths pouring forth from many foreign throats in the language of the people of Mecca. The one Prophet, the one magnetic centre of Islám, the one religious language, the one book—these all strengthen the sense of brotherhood. No wonder then when the late Sultán appealed for funds for the erection of a railway from Damascus to Madína the whole Muslim world responded at once,

and a stream of gifts poured in, hundreds of thousands of pounds being donated from every land where Muslims dwell.

For some time now we have heard a great deal of Pan-Islámism. It is an attempt to link together all the Muḥammadan peoples of the earth into one great unity. Pan-Islámic ideas are very strong in Egypt, Turkey and India, and to foster them societies have been formed even in the out-of-the-way jungle villages.

Another bond of unity is the Khalífa—that is, the vicerent of Muḥammad—the head of Islám. The Sultán of Turkey holds that position, and anybody who touches him touches the vast majority of the Muḥammadans of the world. When the war broke out between Italy and Turkey there was a great outcry everywhere amongst Muslims which showed a unity in Islám never dreamed of before. A matter of politics was made a religious question, for the Khalífa was involved. Even the Senúsí Muḥammadans, dwellers in the interland of Tripoli and the desert beyond, who have ever sneered at the Turks for their adoption of Christian civilization, were prepared to stand by the Khalífa. And the Egyptian Muslims were prepared to do the same.

## CHAPTER II

### THE FOUNDER OF ISLÁM

AMONG the religions of the world there are certain systems which cannot be understood apart from their founders. Buddha's own detachment from the world and his idea of quenched desire have coloured the whole system of renunciation as taught in Buddhism. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the centre round which gathers everything in the Christian belief. Whithout Christ, Christianity would be but a phase of Judaism. In a sense, the same may be said of Islám, for Muḥammad is not only its beginning but its continuance, for every matter is referred back to his word as found in the Qur'án and traditional books. What did Muḥammad say or do? That is the criterion, and his attitude and action in regard to everything, whether dowry or divorce, slavery or spoils, despotism or democracy, have made a law for all time, notwithstanding the attempts of modern Muḥammadans to prove the contrary. To know Muḥammad and his environment, therefore, is essential to an accurate estimate of the religion he founded.

I. *Muḥammad the man.*—Islám was 'born in the open-day.' Its birthday is of comparatively recent date; its histories are fairly full and reliable, and they contain more details concerning the life and character and work of its founder, than are to be found in the

history of any other prophet or incarnation who has claimed to have been sent with a divine message for the human race.

(1) His parentage, birth and youth.—The date usually given for Muḥammad's birth is August 20, A.D. 570, although Dr. Sprenger says it was April 13, A.D. 571. He was born of the noble tribe of Quraish, the only tribe from which leaders could be expected to come. They had special honour in being the hereditary custodians of the Ka'ba. His grandfather, 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib was a chief. His father, 'Abdu'lláh, died before Muḥammad was born, and to add to his misfortune, he lost his mother, Ámina, when he was only six years old. As an orphan he was dependent upon his relatives, and, being poor, he was placed in charge of flocks of sheep and goats. Years afterwards it was his delight to call to mind that, in this minor detail even, he was in the apostolic succession, for, said he, God never took a prophet save from among the sheep-folds.

If legendary lore could immortalize a man, then Muḥammad is the most favoured of man, for the number of legends that surround his birth, childhood and manhood is very great. The legends were fabricated for the most part by his recent followers, who, to support their faith, attempted to show that for every good trait in the character of former prophets, something of more surpassing beauty was to be found in Muḥammad. They also invented stories which made the possessors of previous revelations welcome the Prophet as the one who should come to save the world. Of such stories, there is one which cannot be authenticated but may have in it a certain amount of truth. It relates

to an event in his twelfth year. While travelling with his uncle to Syria, which was then a nominally Christian country, a monk named Sergius or Georgius, but known as Bahíra to the Muḥammadans, is supposed to have recognized the lad as being one he had long found described in his religious books.

(2) His marriages.—When he grew to man's estate, Muḥammad did business for a rich widow named Khadíja, by taking charge of her caravan and by selling her goods in the markets of Syria where he made for his mistress a profit of cent for cent. Upon his return the lady was so impressed with the appearance and faithful character of the young man, that she, through one of her household, hinted that marriage with him would be acceptable to her. He agreed, though he was twenty-five while she was some years his senior. The marriage was celebrated, and proved to be a boon to him in his early career as a prophet. He lived, in many ways, an ideal married life with Khadíja for about twenty years, but after her death he married in rapid succession many wives, and he kept concubines. He had as many as nine wives and two concubines in his cottages at one time.

(3) His habits.—These were simple but he bestowed great care on his person. He was thoroughly domesticated. He swept the floor, kindled the fire, mended his clothes, cobbled his shoes, milked the goats, tied up the camel and also waited upon himself. He was kind to inferiors and accepted invitations to eat with slaves. He visited the sick and followed any bier he chanced to meet. There are traditions full of the minutest details concerning his habits and appearance.



We are told how many fingers he used while eating; how he trimmed his moustache and wore his hair and used his toothpick. We are told, too, of his special fondness for women, perfumes and food. He is said to have been a man of striking appearance, but of delicate constitution.

(4) His temperament.—This was the most nervous imaginable. He was 'afraid of bodily pain and would sob and roar under it.' He was a man gifted with mighty powers of imagination, and had a fine faculty for collecting information, although sometimes it was based on inaccurate knowledge. He had a love for nature and an overpowering sense of the reality of the supernatural. He had a Napoleonic influence over men, was generous and steadfast, but he was hyper-sensitive. This is evident from the amount of space taken up in the Qur'án in refuting those who tried to thwart him. At times he was vindictive, and nothing short of hell fire, with red-hot collars placed round the necks of those he cursed, was adequate punishment for their sin. He gave no quarter to those who opposed him, not even to relatives, and he said of his uncle and aunt, who would not believe in him:—

Let the hands of Abú Lahab perish

And let himself perish!

His wealth and his gains shall avail him not.

Burned shall he be at the fiery flame,

And his wife laden with fire-wood,—

On her neck a rope of palm fibre.<sup>1</sup>

How very different is the attitude of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, who knew what persecution and the

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-Lahab (cxi) 1-5.

rejection of his message meant quite as well as, if not better than, Muḥammad knew. Paul said: 'I have great heaviness and continued sorrow in my heart, for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.'<sup>1</sup>

II. *Muḥammad the Seeker*.—In the history of the people of Arabia of Muḥammad's time there is not wanting proof that there were many who were tired of their idolatrous customs and were bold in expressing their opinions to those they met and in debating the matter with any who happened to disagree with them. Muḥammad, perhaps more than others, was most impressionable, and being a man of leisure since he had married wealth, had time and the inclination to hear and think upon what the different sectarians had to say. He might easily have voiced the lines of 'Umar Khayyám:—

Myself when young did eagerly frequent  
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument.

There were certain formative factors which cannot be overlooked when considering the days of his search for truth.

(1) The home of Khadíja and the circle of her friends and relatives were an environment which did much for Muḥammad at this period of his life. His wife had raised him from poverty to a position of affluence, and she had begun to mould his character to an extent not often recognized. She not only encouraged him in his religious search, but probably did much in the way of forming his ideas upon God and

<sup>1</sup> Rom. ix. 3-4.

religion. Koelle says: 'As Khadīja herself was probably disposed towards Hanīfism, it is highly probable that she exercised her commanding influence over her husband in such a manner as to promote and strengthen his own attachment to the reformatory sect of monotheists.'<sup>1</sup>

(2) It is clear from the Qur'án and other sources that Muḥammad had considerable acquaintance with Christianity and Judaism, particularly the latter, and was influenced by them. We know that at least one speech, delivered by a Christian preacher, left its mark upon him. At the periodical fairs which were a special feature in Arabia, and one of which was so large that the line of booths stretched for ten miles, the Syrian Bishop, Kuss, 'the most eloquent of the Arabs,' used to attend, and while seated on his fine red camel, preach and plead with his hearers to worship the one true living Creator rather than the 360 gods of their national shrine. The fact of his being a bazaar-preacher would indicate an earnestness of purpose to persuade men. Little did he think that standing among those who listened to him one day was a man who would move the world. It is probable that the preacher dwelt that day on themes like death, the day of judgment and the pains of hell, for 'the address as the Arabs preserve it bears a marked likeness to early passages of the Qur'án.'<sup>2</sup>

Some authorities of repute say that Muḥammad was not only influenced by Christian teaching, but that

<sup>1</sup> Koelle, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Margoliouth, *Mohammed*, p. 87.

about this time he was a nominal Christian.<sup>1</sup> And that is quite possible as many of his acquaintances and his wife's relations were either Christians, or knew the Christian religion, and must have faced him with the question of becoming a Christian himself very early in his career.

(3) During his thirty-fifth year, when his mind was exercised on higher things and his nerves were strained to high tension with excessive meditation, an event occurred which must have been to him as a providential call. The holy Ka'ba was in a state of disrepair, and the tribe of the Quraish were the proper persons to repair it. They were divided into four parties, and each party was given the erection of one side of the holy place. This arrangement proved satisfactory and the work went on cheerfully until the walls were four or five feet high, when a difficulty arose. The famous Black Stone, revered by the people of Arabia from pre-historic times, had to be placed in its former position in the wall. Who was to handle the stone? Each party claimed the right to do so. A contention arose which nearly came to bloodshed. For days the work was suspended, but finally it was resolved that the man who should first enter the court of the Ka'ba by a certain gate, should be chosen to arbitrate. The first person was Muḥammad, and the contending parties cried out together; 'Here come the faithful arbiter—al-Amín; we are content to abide his decision.' Muḥammad without much ado quietly took off his mantle and spreading it out before him, placed the stone upon it and told a representative of each of the four parties to hold a corner and lift it

<sup>1</sup> Cairo Conference *Reports*, vol. ii, p. 24.

to the required height. This they did, and Muḥammad with his own hand guided it to its place.

This may appear to be but a small thing, but to Muḥammad it was just the portent he was looking for; it indicated that he was the chosen one of God for a good work in the midst of his own people.

III. *Muḥammad the Prophet*.—(1) He seeks seclusion. After the event in the Ka'ba he gave himself even more to meditation, and spent much time in solitude, especially at Mount Ḥirá, situated about three miles from his home, 'a huge barren rock, torn by cleft and hollow ravine, standing out solitary in the full white glare of the desert sun, shadowless, flowerless, without well or rill.' At the foot of this uninviting mount was a cave where the mystic spent days at a time in prayer and fasting. And to him the place was not without significance. It had a sanctity since Zaid ibn 'Amr, a would-be reformer, had been banished to Mount Ḥirá and had died and been buried there. Then in such places of solitude Deity had manifested Himself to the prophets and saints of old—to Moses and Elijah and to the Messiah of the Christians. Would not God speak to him also?

(2) He lives a life of dread.—In the solitude his religious enthusiasm was strengthened, but his sense of fear increased. Even at that time he might have known the Talmudic fable, which he was so fond of telling afterwards, of how God hung Mount Sinai over the children of Israel, because of their disobedience, and his thoughts would brood upon law, retribution, demons and death. If Ruskin is correct in his opinion that mountains 'excite morbid conditions in the imagination,' then Mount Ḥirá, perhaps, had much to do

with shaping the gloomy aspect of the teaching of Muḥammad.

(3) His first revelation.—At last a day came when he heard a voice say ‘Recite!’ Perhaps he imagined he saw some writing held up before him, for he said he could not read or recite. Then he was taken hold of and squeezed until it became quite painful to him. Thrice came the injunction and thrice was he squeezed, and then he repeated the words to himself, and they were impressed upon his heart :—

Recite thou, in the name of thy Lord who created ;—

Created man from clots of blood :—

Recite thou ! For thy Lord is the most Beneficent,  
Who hath taught the use of the pen ;—

Hath taught men that which he knoweth not.<sup>1</sup>

He returned home in great haste to his faithful wife Khadíja, and told her in great trepidation all that had happened. She listened to his recital and expressed her belief in him and in his message. This encouraged him, but he was not sure whether he had been having intercourse with God or devil, angel or jinn, and for a period there were no revelations to reassure him. Was he going mad ! For days he was on the verge of insanity. Should he commit suicide ! These and other like thoughts ran through his mind.

(4) Call to preach. One day returning to Khadíja he said : ‘Wrap me in my mantle.’ She did so, and thus another message came :—

O thou, enwrapped in thy mantle !

Arise and warn !

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-‘Alaq (xcvi) 1-5.

Thy Lord—magnify Him !

Thy raiment—purify it !

The abomination—flee it !

And bestow not favours that thou mayest receive  
again with increase ;

And for thy Lord wait thou patiently.<sup>1</sup>

From this time forward Muḥammad regarded himself as being under the inspiration of Alláh, with a direct command to preach, brought to him through the medium of the Archangel Gabriel. And this is where the world criticizes and asks for credentials. He claims the right to be listened to as the vicegerent of God ; he claims that his utterances were as much inspired and to the same degree, as were the words of our Lord or of any of the prophets of the Old Testament, hence criticism. His followers go further and invest him with almost divinity, hence bitter criticism on the part of many.

(5) The method of revelation.—From Muḥammad's own statement we learn that the first revelation came to him in a dream, for he says that after receiving it he 'awoke'. But dreams with imaginary messages are of universal experience, and his were not likely to induce men to accept his prophetic claims. He, therefore, sought a superhuman agency, as doubtless he had often heard from Christians that 'men spake being moved by the Holy Spirit,' and soon he was obsessed with the idea that through dreams, visions and trance experiences he actually conversed with Gabriel who eventually became his constant shadow, and whom, in error, he often called 'the Holy Spirit.'

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-Muddaththír (lxxiv) 1-7.

(i) Here is Muḥammad's own account of his experience :—

Your compatriot erreth not, nor is he led astray,  
Neither speaketh he from mere impulse.

The Qur'án is no other than a revelation revealed  
to him :

One terrible in power (i. e. Gabriel) taught it him,  
Endued with wisdom. With even balance stood he  
In the highest part of the horizon :

Then came he nearer and approached,  
And was at the distance of two bows, or even closer—  
And he revealed to his servant what he revealed.

His heart falsified not what he saw. <sup>1</sup>

That Muḥammad saw visions and heard messages we are ready to admit, but when we find repeatedly among those messages an emphatic denial of the fundamental truths of Christianity, we cannot for a moment believe the visions or messages to have been divine.

(ii) His opponents had an altogether different view of the method or medium of inspiration. 'The view prevalent at Mecca concerning Muḥammad appears to have been that he was mad—under the influence of a jinn, one of the beings who were supposed to speak through poets and sorcerers. That this charge stung Muḥammad to the quick may be inferred from the virulence with which he attacks the "bastard" who had uttered it.' <sup>2</sup> He constantly protests against this view. 'Your compatriot is not one possessed by a jinn.' <sup>3</sup> And again 'we have not taught him (Muḥammad) poetry.' <sup>4</sup> But in spite of his protests and the revelations that were supposed to come to clear him, the

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'n-Najm (liii), 2-11. <sup>2</sup> Margoliouth, *Muhammad*, p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> Súratu't-Takwir (lxxxi), 22. <sup>4</sup> Súratu Yá Sín (xxxvi), 69.



people considered him to be a visionary, 'a man enchanted,'<sup>1</sup> and 'a manifest sorcerer.'<sup>2</sup>

(iii) The view taken by many Christian writers to-day is almost identical with the view held by his opponents in his own day. The poets, sorcerers, diviners and saints of Arabia professed to be able to lift the veil that hid the supernatural and to have intercourse with the jinn or genii, 'those beings which for the heathen Arabs were as the fauns, nymphs, and satyrs of the classical world.' Muḥammad was of the káhin (sooth-sayer) type of poet.<sup>3</sup>

This idea has been ably dealt with quite recently by an American Professor of Semitic languages in a scholarly work,<sup>4</sup> and from the quotations given from the *Life of Muḥammad* and from the *Traditions of Islám*, it would appear that he has made out a very good case. He shows that the form of poetry at the time of Muḥammad and long before his time, was nothing more than 'magical utterance, inspired by powers from the unseen.' The poet was part soothsayer, part prophet, part admonisher and in part 'a hurler of magical formulae against his enemies. . . . He drew his knowledge, wisdom, skill and destroying utterance from his relationship to the jinn.' To give an instance: Muḥammad had a friend named Hasán ibn Thábit who was one of these poets, and before he became a follower of the Prophet 'was initiated into poetry by a female jinn. She met him in one of the streets of Madína, leapt upon him, pressed him down,

<sup>1</sup> Súratu Bani Isrá'il (xvii), 50.      <sup>2</sup> Súratu Yúnas (x), 2.

<sup>3</sup> See *Encyclopaedia of Islám*, p. 414, quoted in *The Life of Muḥammad* (C.L.S.), p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> Macdonald, *The Religious Attitude and Life in Islám*,

and compelled him to utter three verses of poetry. Thereafter he was a poet, and his verses came to him as to other Arab poets from the direct inspiration of the jinn.'

Now the singular thing about Muḥammad is that his experiences while inspired were identical with those of the poets; and those who would object to his being classed in this way must admit that his vocabulary, while receiving revelations, was identical with that used by the poets and soothsayers. For just as the poet was thrown down by a jinn and had verses pressed out of him, so Muḥammad is said to have suffered in the same way. Again, the same word 'blow upon' is used by a jinn inspiring the poet and of Gabriel revealing to Muḥammad; and there is the same idea of a companion with Muḥammad prompting him in just the same way as the jinn is said to have accompanied the poet and inspired his utterances.

There is much in this idea that would make interesting psychical research, and in the opinion of Professor Macdonald 'the case of Muḥammad can be indefinitely more completely illustrated and explained by the phenomena of so-called trance-mediumship than by any other hypothesis.'

(iv) But Muḥammad suffered from a malady which cannot be left out of our consideration of the method of revelation. He suffered from fits<sup>1</sup> and paroxysms of cataleptic insanity which were accompanied with strange

<sup>1</sup> For a Tradition in support of this view, which is not generally accepted by Muslims, see *The Life of Muḥammad* (C.L.S.), p. 31, note 4 (Ed.).

psychical phenomena. There is nothing in his history more certain than this, and we have it on the authority of 'Áyisha, that he would be seized with violent trembling followed by a swoon, during which, perspiration would stream from his forehead in the coldest weather, and he would foam at the mouth and 'bellow like a young camel.'

There is something interesting, if not uncanny, in the history of fits and claims to inspiration. Mrs. Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, was subject to fits, and when under their control, used to roll and kick, writhing and screaming in agony. Swedenborg suffered similarly, while Chaitanya, the great Hindu revivalist of North India, used to fall to the ground, curl up and 'roll in the dust like a cart wheel.' At such times he wept, laughed, danced and perspired profusely. It is claimed that while passing through these extraordinary experiences both Muḥammad and Chaitanya were under divine influence, and Swedenborg professed that, while he was suffering from such attacks, he conversed with spirits and angels.

Are such people to be relied upon? Professor Fr. Buhl points out that 'a characteristic which constantly runs through such natures is the complete inability to distinguish falsehood from truth; being governed entirely by compelling ideas, it is impossible for them to view matters in their true relation, and they are so thoroughly convinced of their own right, that not even the most compelling reasoning can persuade them to the contrary.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Article in *The Moslem World* for October 1911, by Professor Fr. Buhl, p. 363.

The importance of these fits in Muḥammad's method of revelation is to be found in the fact that with two or three exceptions they were under his complete control. He could produce most of the symptoms artificially at any moment, and he often did so when he was in need of a revelation to meet some awkward circumstance or to palliate some selfish disposition. He would lie down, wrap himself round, perspire, swoon away or throw himself into a trance and produce by the veriest piece of ventriloquism the supposed utterance of Alláh. It was thus that he brought ultimatums to begin wars; and sanction for himself to marry more than four wives, the number already said to be divinely sanctioned for the Muslim believer, and to marry Zainab, the divorced wife of his adopted son, by which actions he broke not only his own laws, but the laws of his forefathers and the laws of the Jews and Christians which he professed were as divine as his own.

Now with these facts before us what view are we to take of Muḥammad? Many estimates of Muḥammad have been made in regard to his unique claims. They generally fall into three classes.

Those who follow the lead of the mediaeval writers, who without exception made most extravagant statements which were quite uncalled for. They agree that Muḥammad was a false prophet, a corrupter of youth and a common cheat who was determined to bring about the destruction of the souls of men. Luther said he was 'a devil of the first-born son of Satan.' Voltaire thought him to be a 'lustful hypocrite'. Prideaux considered him to be 'a wilful and intentional deceiver from first to last.' Forster, another authority, styles him an

‘impostor, earthly, sensual, devilish, beyond even the licence of his own licentious creed.’ Even to-day there are those who accept these abusive epithets without any qualification whatsoever.

On the other hand, there are those who accept the eulogism of Carlyle as a correct statement of the case. He applauded Muḥammad as the prophet-hero. He represented him as a simple but sincere soul, who ever lived up to the light that was in him. The pendulum swings one way and then the other, first to a blackened record and then to a heavenly character. Neither is right.

Others again, while seeing grievous faults in him, being as he was a creature of circumstances, also recognize that he had worth above many so-called preachers of truth. Two things are clear:—

(a) It is evident that in his early life he sincerely sought to know the truth; he was rather an enthusiast than a hypocrite, for he showed a remarkable earnestness of purpose. When the hostility of the Meccans had brought matters to a climax, his uncle, Abú Ṭálib, was asked to speak to Muḥammad and make him desist from preaching against the gods and customs of the people. Muḥammad was moved to tears by his uncle’s words, but he could not be moved one iota from his belief in his divinely-appointed mission, and his reply has in it a beautiful spirit of consecration to a high and noble task. He said, ‘Though they give me the sun in my right hand, and the moon in my left, to bring me back from my undertaking, yet will I not pause till the Lord carry my cause to victory, or till I die for it.’

When we think of the persecution he underwent and remember how implicitly his first converts accepted

him, we cannot but believe that he was sincere in believing that God had a message for him and a work for him to do in delivering his people from the evils of paganism. Whatever he was afterwards there can be no doubt that he meant every word when he said:—

To Thee do we cry for help,

Guide Thou us on the straight path,

The path of those to whom Thou hast been gracious.<sup>1</sup>

And if the Christians of Arabia had been true to the faith of the New Testament, he might have understood that Christ was 'the straight path' that he was so much in need of.

(b) We must see in him a reformer of no ordinary power and insight, for if he did nothing else he delivered his country from the bondage of idolatry, and urged upon every one the truth of the divine Unity, and this was no small task to perform. He also set apart a day for worship and introduced most drastic social reforms when he prohibited entirely the use of intoxicating liquors, and the burial alive of new-born female children, who were regarded as a nuisance in the Arab family, because of the expense involved in their maintenance.

After an eventful life this rugged reformer, who from first to last retained in his complex nature much of the Bedouin instinct, passed away. He was living with his wives in Madína in the year A. D. 632 when he was taken ill with fever, and on the 8th of June, while in the abode of 'Áyisha, and resting on her bosom, his life ebbed away. Consistently with his former actions he sought in death the help of his supernatural helper by calling

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-Fátiḥa (i) 4-6.

out, 'Gabriel! come close to me.' His last words were a prayer—'O Alláh, grant thy servant pardon, and join him to the companionship on high . . . . Eternity in Paradise . . . . Pardon . . . . Yes! . . . . The companionship of the blessed on high!'

Thus died a man of remarkable ability, strong purpose and resolute courage; a reformer who, understanding the political and religious need of his country, founded a State-religion; a legislator who welded together the scattered clans of his country into a brotherhood that has challenged the world; a warner, and at the same time a cruel despot, who would brook no interference when he wanted to satisfy his whims and fancies.

We cannot sing with the Muslim poet:—

Thou art the heir of all prophetic gifts,  
Combining all the attributes of all apostles,

but we see much in the man that reminds us of the career and character of David, and of the denunciatory and warning power of John the Baptist, and of the legislative ability of Moses, but he lacked in an infinite measure that originality and fixity of ideas, and that consciousness of intuitive goodness, truth and sinlessness which were at all times so marked in our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### NOTE

##### THE IMMEDIATE SUCCESSORS OF MUHAMMAD

1. *Abû Bakr* (ruled A.D. 632-4), also named *aş-Şiddîq*, the true, and *al-'Atiq*, the liberated. He was the father of 'Áyisha, the girl-wife of Muḥammad. He had an important part in the first compilation of the Qur'án.

2. 'Umar (634-44), another father-in-law of the Prophet. Ḥaḥaşa, his daughter, was Muḥammad's third wife. After gaining many victories and much territory for Islám, he was murdered.

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3. 'Uthmān (644-56) was a son-in-law of the Prophet, having married two of his daughters. He was responsible for the *Recension of the Qur'ān*. He was murdered.

4. 'Alī (656-60) the cousin and son-in-law of Muḥammad. He has been appropriately called 'the Bayard of Islām'. He was murdered.

5. Al-Ḥasan (660) son of 'Alī and grandson of Muḥammad. After a few months' reign he abdicated in favour of the Governor of Syria. He was poisoned.

6. Mu'āwiya (660-79) who made the *Khalifate* hereditary, with head-quarters at Damascus. He was a son of Abú Sufyān, who, until forced into Islām, had been a bitter opponent of Muḥammad.

7. Yazīd (679-83) son of Mu'āwiya. His armies killed al-Ḥusain, the second grandson of the Prophet, at Karbala.

The first four are called *al-Khulafā ar-Rāshidūn* or The Four Rightly-guided *Khalīfas*. A good account of them will be found in Sell's *al-Khulafā ar-Rāshidūn* (C.L.S.).



## CHAPTER III

### THE ROOTS OF ISLÁM

CAREFUL research and criticism have made it much easier to say with certainty that the roots of Islám are to be found in systems and movements existing in Arabia in Muḥammad's time. It will be understood, then, that we are not dealing with roots in the same sense as that used by Muslim theologians. The roots of Islám according to them are the articles of their Faith, but we mean the sources or existing elements which became the basis of that Faith. Not that the orthodox Muslim will agree with us, nor will he look favourably upon any one holding any other view than that Islám was wholly the eternal religion decreed by the Almighty and revealed by Him to His servant Muḥammad.

We may mention, however, one learned Muḥammadan, who admits that our position is, to some extent, a correct one. We quote him, because he is one of the best-known Muslim authors in the English-speaking world, and being a follower of the Prophet, he is not likely to be biased in the same way as a Christian may be. Syed Amír 'Alí says: 'There is no doubt that, in all the Súras of the intermediate period before the mind of the teacher had attained the full development of religious consciousness, and when it was necessary to formulate in language

intelligible to the common folk of the desert, the realistic descriptions of heaven and hell borrowed from the floating fancies of Zoroastrianism, Şábíanism and the Talmudic Jew attract the attention as a side picture, and then comes the real essence—the adoration of God in humility and love. The hooris are creatures of Zoroastrian origin, so is paradise [in Persian “firdaus”] whilst ‘hell, in the severity of its punishment, is Talmudic.’<sup>1</sup> Speaking of Christian and other traditions current in Arabia in Muḥammad’s day, the same writer says, the Prophet ‘took them up and adopted them as a lever for raising the Arabs.’<sup>2</sup>

For expressing such liberal opinions, he and many others like-minded have been branded ‘deistic rationalists’ and even infidels (káfirs) by the orthodox, but they have a strong following in India and other places where men have been influenced by Western ideas. But that apart, the statements quoted above—based as they are upon reliable authority—will suffice as a basis for what may be said on the roots of Islám. By all authoritative writers now it is admitted that there existed in Arabia certain religious systems, customs, and traditions from which Muḥammad drew material for shaping the stories, doctrines and poetic fancies of his supposed revelations. To go into details:—

I. *The religion, customs and traditions of the Pre-Islámic Pagan Arabs.*

Those of us who live in India and come into daily contact with the illiterate but devout Hindu, find it no easy matter to state the reason why he religiously

<sup>1</sup> Syed Amír ‘Alí, *The Spirit of Islám*, pp. 235-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Introduction, lix.

goes to the river and does obeisance to the sun and then returns home to make offerings to a sala-gram, or some other rude stone object of worship, which unlike an idol has no representation of an idea. How much more difficult is it to transport the mind to the desert reaches of the Arabia of the fifth century, a land too isolated, even in that age, for the outside world to know much about. Of the beliefs then prevalent this much we know: the Arabs were star-worshippers, but in addition they made a fetish of unshapen stones set apart in territory which was regarded as sacred and inviolable. These stones were smeared with the blood of victims slain in sacrifice. Whether the Ka'ba, with its unique Black Stone, had its origin in this way it is impossible to say. It is not unlikely that the Arabs had heard a distorted account of Jacob's experience at Luz, where realizing the presence of God, he had set up his stone pillow as a memorial pillar, poured oil upon it, and called it, not the place, Bethel, because it was a symbol of the presence of God. Whether the Black Stone originally had the name Baitu'lláh—the House of God—we cannot say, but the edifice in which it is enshrined was so called. For centuries that beautiful name had been dragged in the slime of idolatrous practice, for Muḥammad found in the temple, in addition to stone-worship, the worship of images representing men and women, lions, antelopes and birds.

(1) Muḥammad adopted the ancient temple as the holy place of Islám.—In the first period of his preaching at Mecca, the Ka'ba was to him a place associated with many Abrahamic traditions, but it had become a sink of iniquity which needed to be cleansed of 'the

abomination of Satan.' At Madína, with the increase of power and the need to formulate religious practices, he saw the necessity of providing a Qibla, that is, a spot towards which his followers might turn when in prayer, as the Jews, Christians and Šábians had. In and around Madína, he found large communities of Jews who were restless in their expectation of a coming Messiah, and thinking they might accept his prophetic claims he treated with them, and, for a time, secured their help and goodwill. Then he proclaimed Jerusalem as the Qibla of the Faith. Towards the city in the direction of which Daniel had turned his face thrice daily, Muḥammad and his little company also prostrated themselves, but it was not for long. It was a political move, and when it failed, a convenient revelation came cancelling that given concerning Jerusalem and making the Ka'ba for ever the one spot on this planet towards which all Muslim eyes must turn in prayer and adoration five times a day. It was a concession to paganism and an important step in the nationalization of Islám.

(2) Muḥammad adopted practices connected with the primitive worship:—

(i) Circumambulating the temple.—Pilgrims were in the habit of running round the Ka'ba, which custom probably represented the orbicular motion of the heavenly bodies. In fact, certain Muslim metaphysicians have explained the circumambulation in this way. The custom is still continued by the Muslim pilgrims with but very little variation from the days of paganism. There is one difference, they now wear the *Ihrám* or pilgrim dress. 'In heathen days,' we are told in a tradition by Bukhárí, 'the pilgrims used to perform





MECCA

Mecca

naked the rounds of the Ka'ba,' and only the Quraish were exempted from this rule, but being a privileged class they could lend clothes to their friends and to any pilgrims from foreign places on payment of a fee.

(ii) Stone kissing.—Another practice common among the Semitic races of Arabia was the kissing of stones and images, and it is more than probable that the Black Stone before Muḥammad's time received the osculatory attentions of centuries of superstitious pilgrims and had infinitely more sanctity than the ordinary rocks and stones, because it was said to be an aerolite. To kiss or touch that stone to-day is one of the meritorious acts of Islám, but it will always be a puzzle why Muḥammad should have allowed reverence to be paid to it when he had such a horror of idolatry. We are not surprised that 'Umar, the second Khalifa, should say: 'My God, I well know that thou art simply a piece of stone, and if I had not seen the Apostle of God kiss thee, then I had not kissed thee.'<sup>1</sup>

(iii) Other pagan customs perpetuated.—An important part of the pilgrimage is the running seven times backward and forward between Mount Şafá and Mount Marwa not far from the Ka'ba. Originally there were idols on each of these places and the pilgrims used to visit them. Muḥammad did away with the idols but suffered the visit to continue. It is evident then, as Dr. Zwemer says: 'The whole ceremony of the Muslim pilgrimage

*Note.*—In the picture of Mecca on the opposite page, the Ka'ba and the stations for prayer used by the four renowned Sunní sects may be clearly seen.

<sup>1</sup> *Mishkátu'l-Maṣābiḥ* (Chapter on Pilgrimage).

to Mecca is taken over from pre-Islámic practice and is thoroughly pagan.'

There were other practices common amongst the Arabs, which Muḥammad brought over into Islám, for instance, polygamy, slavery, circumcision, the observance of the month Ramaḍán as a month for fasting, and the cutting off a hand as the punishment for theft.

(3) Muḥammad borrowed beliefs prevalent among the Arabs, and none is more striking than the belief in jinn or genii. He was so impressed with the importance of this imaginary race of weird beings that he devoted a whole chapter of the Qur'án<sup>1</sup> to them, dilating upon their nature, character and religion. The main subject of the chapter is the conversion of some of the Jinn to Islám upon hearing Muḥammad recite the Qur'án.

Muḥammad is often given the credit of introducing the doctrine of the divine Unity into Arabia, but as will be shown hereafter, monotheism must have been known through the presence of Jews and Christians, and may we not presume that the idea of One God had never been obliterated from the traditions that had been handed down concerning Abraham?

The name Alláh appears very often in pre-Islámic poetry and inscriptions and in the names of men including that of Muḥammad's own father, 'Abdu'lláh, and amongst the Arabs Alláh was no ordinary tribal god. He was regarded as the supreme deity in much the same way as Bhagavan or Ishwar is regarded as supreme by the Hindus to-day. There were local

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-Jinn (lxxii).



deities to whom intercession was made in all the petty affairs of the people's everyday life, but when oaths were made and treaties or agreements signed, the parties had to go to the Baitu'lláh and call upon Alláh to seal the transaction with His blessing. The one argument that Muḥammad consistently used against the Meccans was the admitted superiority of Alláh. He twitted them with making the tutelary gods 'partners' of Alláh, and drawing distinctions between them and Alláh. He argued from the custom they had of setting apart one portion of a field for the Supreme God and another portion for the inferior gods.<sup>1</sup> He also points out to them their practice of deserting their gods when in peril and calling upon God Himself. 'All your blessings are assuredly from God: then, when trouble befall-eth you, to Him ye turn for help: then when He relieveth you of the trouble, lo! some of you join associates with your Lord.'<sup>2</sup> 'Lo! when they embark on shipboard, they call upon God, vowing him sincere worship, but when He bringeth them safe to land, behold they join partners to Him.'<sup>3</sup>

To-day in Bengal there is something very similar amongst the Hindus. In all extremities they come back to God. Propose a difficult subject and, they will not reply that Śiva, or Kṛishṇa, or Kali is acquainted with the matter, but they say, 'Ishwar knows,' using the common title for the Supreme God. But this argument is as old as Tertullian. That early Church

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-An'ám (vi) 137, with Rodwell's foot-note.

<sup>2</sup> Súratu'n-Naḥl (xvi) 55-6. <sup>3</sup> Súratu'l-'Anqabút (xxix) 65.

Father noticed that the pagans of his day did the same thing. In common conversation they used to say: 'God grant that it may be so', 'If God will' and other like phrases; and Tertullian addressing the soul, asked: 'How happens it that instead of naming any of the numerous deities who are the objects of heathen worship, you use the word Deus, and thus unconsciously bear testimony to the existence of one Supreme God?'

It is striking that Muḥammad should argue in the same way from the natural testimony of the soul to the divine Unity.

(4) Judaism.—Muḥammad borrowed so much from the Jews of his day that his religion has been called 'a spurious form of Judaism.' For at least four hundred years before Muḥammad the Jews had been in Arabia and in certain centres were numerous and powerful. They were not learned, but they would impress their monotheistic ideas upon people wherever they went. They were more conversant with the fables of the Mishna, Talmud and Haggadah than with the Old Testament Scriptures. Lane-Poole, writing of the orations at Mecca, says that Muḥammad introduced into them numerous stories 'derived with considerable corruptions, from the Jewish Haggadah. More than fifteen hundred verses, nearly a quarter of the Qur'án, are occupied with wearisome repetitions of these legends.'<sup>1</sup> An Indian Muḥammadan gentleman who has gone into the question very thoroughly says: 'Muḥammad has not merely accepted dogmas and doctrines of Judaism, minute Talmudical ordinances, but has even

<sup>1</sup> S. Lane-Poole, *The Speeches of Muḥammad*, Introduction, xl-i. xl-xli.

adopted in their entirety some of the Jewish practices, and, far above all these, that which, indeed, constitutes the very foundation of Islám, namely, the conception of a severe and uncompromising Monotheism.' <sup>1</sup>

(5) Christianity.—The opinions of scholars are diverse concerning the part that Christianity had in the fermentation which preceded Islám in Arabia. A recent writer says: 'Jewish and especially Christian ideas penetrated from the south and their influence cannot be estimated. The important point for us to consider is the existence of Christianity in Southern Arabia before the Muḥammadan period. Nor was the south its starting-point. Christian doctrine came to Arabia from the north, from Syria and Babylonia, and numerous conversions, for the most part of whole tribes, were made. On the frontiers also Arabian merchants of the Christian Faith could be found throughout Arabia. But for the Arabian migration and the simultaneous foundation of a new Arabian religion, there is no doubt that the whole peninsula would have been speedily converted to Christianity.'<sup>2</sup>

That Christians were numerous and influential is proved by the fact that certain towns were wholly under their control. Nejran became a Christian town in the fourth century A.D., and Petra had a resident metropolitan with several Arabian bishoprics subject to him. At Ṣan'a there was a Christian colony under a Governor named Abraha, who built a cathedral which was 'the wonder of the age.' It was evidently erected to eclipse

<sup>1</sup> S. Khuda Bukhsh, *Essays : Indian and Islámic*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>2</sup> Becker, *Christianity and Islám*, pp. 12-13.

the Ka'ba, for an edict issued by Abraha commanded all the Arabian people to perform their pilgrimage to the new church instead of to the Ka'ba. But the people refused to obey the order, so Abraha determined to go and destroy the Ka'ba, and he marched himself at the head of his Abyssinian troops on an elephant, hence the 'War of the Elephant.' It was in that year that Muḥammad was born, and as a boy he must have heard of the coming of the Christian troops and of their ignominious defeat, or as he puts it in a chapter in the Qur'án devoted to this one topic—'Thy Lord . . . made them like stubble eaten down.'<sup>1</sup>

Then the fact that in the Ka'ba a place was given to a fresco of the Virgin Mary and the child Jesus would go to show that Christianity must have made some progress even in Mecca. Probably the guardians made room for it as a concession to an influential Christian community.

Our contention that Islám has drawn from Christian sources is not weakened in the least when we say that the Christianity of Arabia in Muḥammad's time was of the most corrupt kind. Its doctrine was mostly heretical, its practice idolatrous, its teaching apocryphal—all of which are truly reflected in those sections of the Qur'án which have reference to the Christian religion. A perusal of the Apocryphal writings of that day should convince any one that Muḥammad had access to the absurd stories they relate. To give instances relating to our Lord and his mother, which are almost literally the same in both the Qur'án and the Apocryphal Gospels: Zacharias is supposed to have reared the Virgin Mary in the temple

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-Fíl (cv), 5.

at Jerusalem ; she was there fed by heavenly visitants ; lots were cast as to who should be husband to her ; the Jews charged her with being unchaste ; Jesus spake when he was in his cradle ; he made figures of birds out of clay and clapping his hands commanded them to fly away.

Koelle maintains that had Muḥammad wished it he could have sought out a purer conception of Christianity. And this is likely. The Qur'án is so full of rabbinical ideas and Apocryphal stories that it would seem true that Muḥammad did engage renegade Jews and monks, as it is often alleged, to hunt up disputed traditions that he might be furnished with ideas for his supposed revelations. That a truer conception of the Trinity existed in Arabia, than that which Muḥammad and the majority of the Christians around Mecca had, is shown, as we think, by ample evidence. It is found in certain inscriptions which have been unearthed. One was set up by Abraha in A.D. 542 or 543, and begins, 'In the power and grace and mercy of the merciful (Raḥmánán) and his Messiah and of the Holy Spirit.' Then 'an exceedingly-interesting fragment in the Ottoman Museum, O.M. 281, concludes, "In the name of the Merciful and his Son Krestos the victorious (Ghálíbán) and of the Holy Ghost".<sup>2</sup> This fragment is probably older than the other by thirty years, and shows that the doctrines of the Trinity and divine Sonship were expressed in a form familiar to us to-day,

<sup>1</sup> See *The Gospels of the Birth of Mary ; The Protevangelion of James the Less ; The Gospels of the Infancy*. (Hone's edition).

<sup>2</sup> *The Encyclopedia of Islám*, p. 378.

and much nearer to truth than the Tritheism which Muḥammad accepted as the belief of Christianity and which he so stoutly opposed as a rank heresy.

There is one Christian doctrine, namely, the resurrection from the dead, upon which the Prophet may not have been particularly sound, but he was certainly persistent in its advocacy and that in face of repeated ridicule on the part of the Meccan Arabs. Their opposition would show that it was not the belief of the pre-Islámic Arabs, or at least a large section of them who were not of the Jewish or Christian Faiths. Further, 'the idea of a reckoning between man and God was alien to the Arab mind,' but it is a fundamental truth in both Judaism and Christianity, and it is more than probable that Muḥammad learnt about it from these faiths, although he borrowed much of his description of the reckoning from the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*.

(6) The Šábíans.—From the way some authors write about these people it is evident that they confuse them with the Šábían star-worshippers of Mesopotamia, but it is now generally admitted that the Šábíans who helped to create an atmosphere for the springing of the germ of Islám, were a sect of semi-Christian anchorites possessing mystico-theosophical ideas mingled with a worship of the planets. They believed in one God and claimed to have received their religion from Seth and Edris (Enoch) and to have possessed a book which had been revealed to Seth. John the Baptist, also, was one of their prophets, and it would appear that they practised baptism. They dwelt in the Syro-Babylonian desert, and were closely allied to the Jewish Essenes who lived by the Dead Sea, and to the Christian monks of Egypt.

Their aim was to escape from the world of luxury, intrigue and amusement into a life of simplicity, piety and virtue. They sought quiet to look steadfastly at heaven and hell and at the awful realities which they felt must be faced at the coming judgment.

That their influence was considerable is proved from the high honour accorded them by Muḥammad. He placed them with Jews and Christians as 'those to whom the Scriptures have been given,' or literally 'the people of the book.' That they were more highly thought of than the members of the Greek and Syrian Churches is evident from the history of Bedouin poetry, where they are favourably compared with the priests of organized Christendom. The simple religious life of the Šábíans appealed to the Arabs far more than did the Virgin and Saint worship and rich ceremonial of the Byzantine Churches and the unreal life of the shaven-headed clergy. And doubtless the fierce contests on the wording of creeds among the Greek, Nestorian, Eutychian and other Christian sects were odious to those who were seeking a simple faith to satisfy the longings of the soul.

The Šábíans had ceremonies which were identical with those adopted by Muḥammad. They had forms of purification and a Qibla, but authors differ as to the direction of that Qibla. Sir Syed Aḥmad Khán says: 'With the revealed doctrines of Šábíanism Islám was entirely identical. . . . The Šábíans had seven times for prayer, which they performed in the same way as the Muḥammadans do, and like Muḥammadans they kept fast for one lunar month'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sir Syed Aḥmad Khán, C.I.S., *Essays on the Life of Muhammad*..

(7) The Ḥanífis.<sup>1</sup>--There was another class of people that acted as a light to Muḥammad in his darkness. They were called Ḥanífis but sometimes Šábíans and even Muslims. The word 'Ḥaníf' may mean penitent or sceptic. They were called Ḥanífis at Mecca, because they deviated from the national religion. They were protestants; they opposed the foolish fetish worship and superstitious customs of their countrymen. They did not form themselves into a sect, although a few individuals met secretly and talked over the reforms they wished to see made. It is related that at the celebration of one of the idol feasts, four of the Arabian contemporaries of Muḥammad solemnly declared that it was time for the idolatrous practices of their forefathers to cease. 'We have strayed from the religion of Abraham,' said they, 'what is this thing round which we periodically cause processions to move but a block of senseless stone which sees not nor hears. It can do neither harm nor good. Let us make a compact to leave home and kindred and go and seek for the truth and the pure religion of our father Abraham.'

These four Ḥanífis are known by name. They were Waraqa, a man of education with considerable acquaintance with the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, 'Ubaidu'lláh, 'Uthmán and Zaid ibn 'Amr. Of these the first three became Christians. 'Ubaidu'lláh was one of the early followers of Muḥammad. He migrated with the other refugees to Abyssinia where he became the first convert from Islám to Christianity, and in argument with his former companions in Islám he used to say: 'We see clearly, but you are yet blinking.'

<sup>1</sup> See *The Ḥanífis* (C.L.S.)



Zaid ibn 'Amr has been already mentioned as having died at Hirá. So long as he was allowed in Mecca, he went daily to the Ka'ba and leaning against the wall he used to pray: 'Lord, if I knew in what manner Thou wouldst that I should serve and adore Thee, I would obey Thy will; but I do not know. O give me light.' Zaid is the outstanding figure in this little group of Hanífs; his beliefs are to be found in a piece of poetry that has come down to us from his pen:—

One Lord or a thousand Lords  
 Shall I worship? Are things then partitioned out?  
 I have abandoned Allát and 'Uzzá altogether . . .  
 . . . I serve as my Lord the Merciful One,  
 That the forgiving Lord may forgive my sin.  
 Preserve ye therefore the fear of God, your Lord:  
 When ye preserve it not, it shall not perish.  
 Thou shalt see the pure: gardens are their abode:  
 And for the unbelievers is hell fire blazing:  
 And in life is disgrace, and that they should die:  
 That with which their breasts shall be oppressed  
 shall they meet.<sup>1</sup>

From these lines it is evident that he believed in one God and declaimed against the false worship of idolatry; he also believed in heaven and hell. He was opposed to infanticide and many other barbarous customs. Muḥammad had the highest respect for Zaid ibn 'Amr. Some time after Zaid's death, Muḥammad was asked if he would pray for his soul. He replied 'Yes! for verily he shall be raised up by himself as a religious sect.' This reverence stands out all the more marked when we know that the Prophet, who was

<sup>1</sup> Tisdall, *The Sources of the Quran*, p. 267.

greatly attached to his mother, refused to pray for her soul, because she had died a pagan.

That Muḥammad had a predilection for the Ḥanífis may be seen in the fact that he had twelve Ḥanífite companions. Ḥanífism, says Deutsch, is 'the clue to Islám,'<sup>1</sup> while Sprenger says: 'Muḥammad openly acknowledged Zaid as his precursor, and every word known as Zaid's we find again in the Qur'án.'<sup>2</sup>

(8) Ismá'ilism.—For another root, perhaps the main root of Islám, because it is more discernible in its fruits, we must go back beyond all the others. We must return to a tent in the desert, in which were born two sons who were destined to become the fathers of two races that produced two distinct religious systems with two entirely different spirits. In one we have the cult of Isaac and the generations that should inherit the promise, and enjoy the righteousness by faith, and in the other the cult of Ismá'il and the generations of bondage. In that tent through distrust of Jehovah, polygamy was introduced, which single sin brought to the world a history of jealousy, bitterness, envy and hate unparalleled in human annals. Not that Abraham despised his first-born son; on the contrary, he had a deep affection for him and entreated Jehovah night and day with strong crying, 'May Ismá'il live before Thee!' But he could not keep the lad in his tent with the mother of Isaac, so calling Hagar to him, he gave her his decision and banished her to the desert. But God answered Abraham's prayer and made a promise of temporal

<sup>1</sup> *Literary Remains of Emanuel Deutsch*, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> Koelle, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, p. 53.

blessing to the lad; he should become the father of a great nation. This promise was abundantly fulfilled, and he became the progenitor of many great races in and about Arabia.

Did Muḥammad descend from Ismá'íl? Burton says: 'There is nothing more remarkable in the annals of the Arabs than their efforts to prove the Ismá'ílitic descent of Muḥammad; at the same time, no historic question is more open to doubt or more difficult to prove.'<sup>1</sup> Muḥammad himself firmly believed that he was of the seed of Ismá'íl and gloried in the belief, but a traditionist says that 'he gave up as insoluble the question of his descent from Ismá'íl.'<sup>2</sup> But whether he has descended from Ismá'íl or not need not concern us. One thing is certain, Islám has descended from Ismá'íl, for we find running through it the Ismá'ílitish spirit to a marked degree:

(i) Ismá'íl was a desert child.—The wilderness became his home, and hunting and plunder his profession. The Scripture said: 'he will be a wild man: his hand will be against every man and every man's hand against him.'<sup>3</sup> In this we find a remarkable resemblance to the character and mode of life of the Bedouin of Arabia. He is untamed, refractory and rebellious. He scorns handicraft. 'Cattle-rearing, trading, hunting and robbery are in his opinion the only occupations worthy of men. . . . To rob camels and often wives

<sup>1</sup> Burton, *Pilgrimage to al-Madinah and Mecca*, vol. i, p. 350 (*Bohn*).

<sup>2</sup> Bate, *The Claims of Ishmael*, p. 115.    <sup>3</sup> Gen. xvi. 12.

and children as well from any tribe, best of all from a hostile one, and to spill as little blood as possible that no blood feud may be created, is the Baiḍáwí's ideal life. The women and children can be ransomed, the booty is divided according to fixed rules.' Even Muslim pilgrims to-day are compelled to travel from Jiddeh to Mecca in companies because of the Baiḍáwí's lawlessness and violence, and the Government gives bakhshish to tribes *en route* to ensure a peaceful passage of their caravans.

(ii) Ismá'íl was a slave-child.—We can imagine the Apostle extending his argument to cover the Muslim's idea of God's relationship with man, which idea colours the whole fabric of Islámic faith and practice. God is a Sovereign and man His slave, over whom He exercises despotic authority. Spiritual sonship is as objectionable to the child of Islám as the sonship of Isaac was to Ismá'íl in the days of the family feud. In this we see the fulfilment of Scripture that 'the women represent two Covenants,' and all down the stream of time contrary conceptions are the result, because one was born of the will of man, while the other entering the realm of the miraculous was the chosen of God. The one walks in the freedom of the spirit, while the other labours in the bondage of forms and ceremonies.

The Muslim can never rise higher than being 'Abd or 'Abdu'lláh—a slave or the slave of Alláh, and it is noticeable how this idea works out in his life.

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopedia of Islám*, p. 375.

It affects his religious life and exercises. 'Verily there is none in heaven or on earth,' said Muḥammad, 'but shall approach the Merciful as His slave.'<sup>1</sup> The great taskmaster has commanded man to appear before him. He has stipulated the language in which the prayers are to be said, fixed the times and set the phrases. There is no option on the part of man; he must either obey or suffer the consequences. Fellowship and communion are ideas foreign to the Qur'anic conception of worship, and prayer is the mechanical act of one who may approach only in fear to a divine Sulṭán who has no Fatherly interest in man, but who makes arbitrary demands on his time and obedience.

It affects his social life: a man becomes like his god. Conceive of God as a despot and man becomes despotic in his dealings with others, and lacks that sense of human sympathy and equality which is necessary to a true brotherhood, hence polygamy, slavery, concubinage and easy divorce.

It affects the political life and constitution of the state. Take all the lands under Muslim rule and despotism is written large upon them all. The leaven of Christian civilization has so influenced leaders in Turkey and other lands of Islám that they have tried to institute constitutional monarchies, but such political reforms are incompatible with the Qur'anic ideas of God and the state. Lane-Poole depicts the states under Islám thus: 'In the East *l'état c'est moi*, the King is the state, its ministers are his instruments, its people are his slaves. His worse excesses and most savage cruelties are endured in the

<sup>1</sup> Súratu Maryam (xix) 93.

same way as plague and famine; all belong to the irresistible and inscrutable manifestations of the divine order of the universe.'

Such, then, are the roots of Islām. All the materials for the revelations were within easy reach of Muḥammad. Visits to the bishops and monks, conversations with the Magians and Jews, loitering in the Mecca market to listen to the recital of certain traditions, lingering at a church to catch snatches of Christian song and phrases from Bible-readings, creeds and sermons—in this way he secured what he wanted. He got scraps of history, stories of faith, ancient tales of miraculous happenings and outlines of striking characters. These passed through his perfervid brain and became the foundation of that marvellous superstructure which we find built up in the Qur'án.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE BELIEF OF ISLÁM <sup>1</sup>

ASK a Christian of ordinary intelligence to express his faith in a concise phrase, easily understood and clearly defining the bed-rock truths of Christianity and he might find it a difficult task. The Muslim is never lost for such a phrase ; he has ever on the tip of his tongue the clearest of pithy statements, that for him 'There is no god but God ; Muḥammad is the Apostle of God.' He stakes his all upon that. It is his kalima or creed ; it is said to be repeated by every Muslim, above the earth and under the earth, in heaven and in hell, and there is nothing to compare with it, not even among the utterances of the Almighty ; it is the one and only text inscribed upon the base of the celestial throne from before the creation of the world. It proclaims in no indefinite terms that idolatry is false, that there is but one God who has revealed His mind to mankind through Muḥammad. Ask the Muslim for further details of his faith and he might quote the words of the Qur'án : 'Whoever believeth not on God and His angels, and His books and His apostles, and in the last day, he verily hath erred with far-gone error,' <sup>2</sup> for that was the

<sup>1</sup> The technical term is Imán.

<sup>2</sup> Súratu'n-Nisá' (iv) 135.

reasonable faith preached by the Prophet, and is in marked contrast to the intricate theologies and metaphysics which have been built up on these simple words by different Muslim sectaries since his day.

Muḥammad adhered to these five articles of faith, but another must be added, namely belief in predestination, which with the progress of time, the Muḥammadans have exaggerated out of all proportion, until it assumes to-day, in a fatalistic tendency, an ascendancy over all the others.

The Creed of Islām then, including the above statement about God and Muḥammad, is as follows :—

Belief in God and His supreme authority.

Belief in angels and their universal ministrations.

Belief in books and their divine inspiration.

Belief in apostles and their dispensational messages.

Belief in the last day and final destinies.

Belief in divine decrees and predestination.

I. *One God and His supreme authority.*—To Muḥammad, God was very powerful and very majestic, a personal God, and one whose handiwork was clearly manifest in nature. He says, ‘He (God) hath spread the earth for you like a carpet . . . He causeth the dawn to appear . . . He hath placed in the heavens the moon as a light and the sun as a torch; they are for computing the time! . . . It is He who hath ordained the stars for you that ye may be guided thereby in the darkneses of the land and of the sea! . . . We send forth the fertilizing wind, and cause the rain to come down from heaven and we bring forth by it the buds of all the plants and from them bring we forth the green foliage, and the close-growing grain, and palm trees with sheaths of clustering dates, and gardens of



grapes, and the olive and the pomegranate . . . The very birds as they spread their wings utter the praise of God . . . All these are signs to you, if ye would understand.’<sup>1</sup> At first Muḥammad did not argue, but in eloquent speech gave dazzling pictures of God’s wonderful works in creation. There is one phrase Muḥammad often used with special delight, which graphically covers all these utterances. It was ‘The face of God.’ By it he undoubtedly meant to express the truth that the self, the essence of Alláh, the Creator, may be seen in nature. ‘Whichever way ye turn, there is the face of God.’<sup>2</sup>

(1) The divine name:—In Islám, Allah is the essential name of God. It is derived from al-iláh, ‘the God.’ It is expressed in Urdu and Musalmáni-Bengali by Khuda, from the Persian Khud, meaning ‘the self’ or self existing one.

(2) The divine Unity:—Islám may be said to proclaim three unities. (i) It teaches the unity of humanity; all men are one in that they have a Creator who created them of ‘clots of blood,’ and favoured them with revelations, or as Muḥammad expressed it in one of his earliest utterances, man ‘had been taught that which he knoweth not.’ To obtain satisfactory knowledge about God, intuitive knowledge was not sufficient. Man—every man—was dependent upon a Being apart from himself for life and spiritual knowledge. (ii) It teaches the unity of faith. There was supposed to be a continuity of faith in the world from the beginning of

<sup>1</sup> Súratu’l-An‘ám (vi) 99, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Súratu’l-Baqara (ii) 109.

time. It mattered not what the revealed religions had been called. Islám was the essential essence in them all, and the faithful prophets of all ages had been Muslims. 'Abraham was neither a Jew nor Christian,' said Muḥammad, 'but he was sound in the faith, a Muslim.'<sup>1</sup> (iii) But the unity which comes before all else in Islám is the Unity of God. Muḥammad did not claim to preach any new doctrine about God; he rather taught that he had been sent to revive belief in the divine unity. We therefore find this one message the burden of the whole Qur'án, but it is specially declared in a single chapter that contains but four verses or lines called 'The Unity'—a chapter regarded as of equal value with one-fourth of the whole Qur'án. We quote it:—

Say: He is God alone:

God the eternal!

He begetteth not, and He is not begotten;

And there is none like unto Him!<sup>2</sup>

From these lines Muslims teach that God is eternally One and therefore there could not be daughters of God as the angels<sup>3</sup> and jinn<sup>4</sup> were thought to be, nor any son begotten of God, as the Christians said there was,<sup>5</sup> nor a son in the sense that the Jews called Ezra the son of God.<sup>6</sup> Further the divine Unity is made to clash with belief in the Trinity, and the Christian custom of calling the monks 'Rabbí,'<sup>7</sup> which to Muḥammad was

<sup>1</sup> Súratu Áli 'Imrán (iii) 60.

<sup>2</sup> Súratu'l-Ikhlâş (cxii). <sup>3</sup> Súratu'n-Naḥl (xvi) 59.

<sup>4</sup> Súratu'l-An'ám (vi) 101. <sup>5</sup> Súratu Maryam (xix) 31-9.

<sup>6</sup> Súratu't-Tauba (ix) 31. <sup>7</sup> Ibid (ix) 31.

blasphemy, since in his opinion Rabb should be used only of God.

(3) The divine attributes:—The divine attributes are life, knowledge, power, will, hearing, seeing and speaking. The first four are essential; the others could not exist without them. That these attributes exist all Muslims are agreed, but as to the mode of existence and operation there has been great difference of opinion. To us the important matter is: how are we to know the character of this God! It is impossible to think of a personal God without life, knowledge, power, and will, but what is His method and motive in action? Muslims say this is to be found in special epithets; 'To Him are ascribed excellent titles.'<sup>1</sup> These 'excellent titles' are ninety-nine in number, and are devoutly recited by all true Muslims, with the aid of a rosary, as a work of merit. These describe the qualities of God, therefore to study them is to find out something of the nature and character of Alláh. We cannot mention all the titles here,<sup>2</sup> but will refer to a few of the important ones. Alláh is the Glorious, Exalted, Majestic, Subsisting King, the Eternal, who creates, sustains and shows mercy and compassion; He is forgiving, loving and exalting, but also the Avenger, causing distress, abasement and destruction. There are many titles that look to be Christian, but are they? It is a very common assumption among certain people that Muslims and Christians worship one and the same God. That may be, but the conception which we have in the God and

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-A'ráf (vii) 179.

<sup>2</sup> See Hughes, *Dictionary of Islám*, pp. 141-2.

the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and that in Alláh are far from being the same.

(i) God is said to be the Almighty, All-Powerful, All-Knowing and All-Seeing, but to the Muslim these terms have no reference to the moral nature of God; they are mere metaphysical explanations of God's attitude to the physical world. In a famous exposition of the creed of Islám by al-Ghazálí we read: 'God hears alike the loudest and the most gentle sounds and sees all things, even the walking in the dark night of a black ant on a black stone, and hears the treading of its feet.' It is evident, as Dr. Zwemer says: 'In the Qur'án, God's eye is a big microscope; by which He examines His creatures. In the Bible, His eye is a flame of fire laying bare the deepest thoughts and intents of the heart.'

(ii) God is called the Holy King (al-Máliku'l-Qúddús):<sup>1</sup> What Muḥammad's conception of the holiness of God was, it is difficult to say. It probably expressed a contrast between the might and majesty of God and the frail dependence of man, for the word 'Holy' which is used as a divine title but twice in the Qur'án, occurs only in combination with the title 'King'. The Christian maintains that God is perfectly good and that all His actions are consistent with that character, so that He is merciful, just and righteous only in holiness and not because He is great. Therefore God cannot look lightly upon sin; in fact He cannot but hate it. His eyes are 'too pure to behold evil.'<sup>2</sup> We look in vain for such moral perfection that is ever opposed to

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-Ḥashr (lix) 23 and Súratu'l-Jumu'a (lxii) 1.

<sup>2</sup> Hab. i. 13.

human sin, in the Muslim idea of 'the Holy King.' In striking contrast is our Lord's 'Holy Father.'<sup>1</sup> Dr. Forsyth says: 'There is a height and a depth in the Father beyond His utmost pity and His kindest love. He is holy Father and Redeemer, and it is His holiness of fatherhood that is the source of our redemption and sonship. . . . Christ's own prayer was "Holy Father." That was Christ's central thought of God, and He knew God as He *is*. The new revelation in the cross was more than "God is love." It was this "Holy Father." That is, God at His divinest, as He was to Christ, as He was *in* Christ.'<sup>2</sup>

(iii) God is said to be the Merciful (ar-Rahmán), the Kind (ar-Ra'uf), the Loving (al-Wadúd), and the Just (al-'Adl), though the last title does not appear in the Qur'án. While these are all supposed to be moral qualities, we feel that there is an immoral tendency in all of them since the blessings to be derived from them are wholly for Muslims. Alláh 'makes it easy' for those who believe in the Prophet, passing over certain of their sins, while he punishes with a grievous punishment the same sins in non-Muslims. He plots to deceive the Jews, for he is the best plotter,<sup>3</sup> and it pleased him to create men for the purpose of bringing them into the world to sin and then fill hell with them. We read: 'He whom God guideth is the guided, and they whom he misleadeth shall be the lost; many,

<sup>1</sup> John xvii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Forsyth, *The Holy Father and the Loving Christ*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> Súratu Áli 'Imrán, iii. 47.

moreover, of the jinn and men have we created for hell.<sup>1</sup> Further: 'I will surely fill hell with jinn and men.'<sup>2</sup> What could be a greater libel on God our Father, whose name and nature are love, who, the Bible says: 'is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance'?

Alláh is given other titles that are not in keeping with the Christian conception of God. He is called al-Jabbár (the Tyrant), al-Mutakabbir (the Haughty), and ad-Darr (the Distresser). How can this be? God is Almighty, that is the talisman that covers every difficulty. Does man's poor weak mind imagine that God is inconsistent by changing his mind or his message, or that he is showing weakness of character by showing favours only to Muḥammadans, whether bad or good, and that he encourages sin! The Muslim says: 'It may appear so, yea more, it may be so, for he is Almighty and his justice cannot be arraigned.' Man is not to judge the actions of his Maker, nor presume to attempt to think out, even, what God is and does, as a well-known saying has it:—

Whatever your mind can conceive  
That God is not, you may well believe.

## II. *Angels and their universal ministrations.*—

Muḥammad had a great deal to say about angels. The pagan idea was that angels were the daughters of God. In opposition to this, Muḥammad said they have no sexual distinction, and they neither eat nor drink. They were supposed to have been created of light, but

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-A'ráf (vii) 177-8.

<sup>2</sup> Súratu's-Sajda (xxxii) 13.

a text in the Qur'án makes it doubtful if they are immortal.<sup>1</sup> They are graded, and their service is manifold. Some bear the Throne of God, others encircle it, celebrating the praise of their Lord and imploring forgiveness for the believers.<sup>2</sup> Others attend upon mankind for 'Each hath a succession of angels before him and behind him, who watch over him by God's behest,'<sup>3</sup> and they establish the faithful.<sup>4</sup> At death certain angels are appointed to take away the soul,<sup>5</sup> and none but angels, nineteen in number, have been made guardians of the fire.<sup>6</sup>

The most eminent angels are: (1) Jibrá'il (Gabriel), who is known as the Angel of Revelation. His size was stupendous, so at times he came in human form to the Virgin Mary and Muḥammad; (2) Míká'il, who especially provides for man's body and soul; (3) Isráfíl, the Angel of the Resurrection, who on the last day will sound the trumpet to awaken the dead; (4) 'Izrá'il, the angel of death.

Muḥammad taught that certain angels had fallen from their high estate, and mentions at least three such in the Qur'án. Hárút and Márút, 'in consequence of their want of compassion for the frailties of mankind, were sent down to earth to be tempted, and both sinned.'<sup>7</sup> Then Satan was a fallen angel. He was cast out of heaven because through pride he refused to do homage to the newly-created Adam, and received the name of

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'z-Zumar (xxxix) 68.      <sup>2</sup> Súratu'l-Mu'min (xl) 7.

<sup>3</sup> Súratu'r-Ra'd (xiii) 12.      <sup>4</sup> Súratu'l-Anfál (viii) 12.

<sup>5</sup> Súratu'l-An'ám (vi) 61.      <sup>6</sup> Súratu'l-Mudaththir (lxxiv) 30.

<sup>7</sup> Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 96 with Rodwell's foot-note and Sell's

*The Faith of Islám*, pp. 142-4.

Eblis, which may be a corruption of Diabolos. When asked why he would not bow down to Adam, Eblis replied, 'I am more excellent than he; thou hast created me of fire, and him thou hast created of clay.'<sup>1</sup>

The jinn are more allied to Satan than to the angels. We have already seen how Muḥammad gave an important place to them in Islām. They were grosser in body than the angels and propagated their kind. On their own statement, Muḥammad had it, 'There are some of us who have resigned themselves to God (Muslims); and there are others of us who have gone astray.'<sup>2</sup>

III. *Books and their divine inspiration.*—In Islām the belief in inspired books is absolutely necessary. Of these there were one hundred and four, one hundred of which have ceased to exist. They were given as follows—ten to Adam, fifty to Seth, thirty to Idris (Enoch), ten to Abraham, and one each to Moses, David, Jesus and Muḥammad, namely, the Pentateuch (Taurát), Psalms (Zabúr), Gospel (Injíl) and Qur'án respectively. High honour is given by Muslims to the above-mentioned books of the Bible, or rather to the titles of those books, not the contents, for they assert that our present editions of them have been so mutilated that it is impossible to accept them as genuine. Even if proved genuine, they say, the fact that the Qur'án superseded them is sufficient reason why their teaching should be discarded.

IV. *Prophets and their dispensational messages.*—

Islām teaches that God by an act of special favour

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-A'ráf (vii) 10-12.

<sup>2</sup> Súratu'l-Jinn (lxxii) 14.



sent prophets to make known His mind and will to man. The number sent is generally given as one hundred and twenty-four thousand. If an illiterate Muḥammadan of the swamps of Eastern Bengal can give no other figures, he can tell the number of the prophets sent; it is an article of faith with him. These prophets have been divided into apostles and prophets. A prophet is one who was divinely guided to teach men the truth, while the apostles, said to be three hundred and thirteen in all, were of much higher rank in that they were sent to bring in new dispensations of truth, with special book-revelations. Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad were both prophets (nabí) and apostles (rasúl), but Muḥammad was thought to be something more since he was the last, 'the seal of the prophets.'<sup>1</sup> Six of the apostles are called great prophets (Nabí'u'l-'Aẓím) and received special titles. They are Adam, Sufiyu'lláh, the Chosen of God; Noah, Nabi'u'lláh, the Prophet of God; Abraham, Khalílu'lláh, the Friend of God, Moses, Kalímu'lláh, the Speaker with God; Jesus, Rúḥu'lláh, the Spirit of God; and Muḥammad, Rasúlu'lláh, the Apostle of God. Muḥammad has in addition two hundred and one other names and titles of honour. There are twenty-two other prophets mentioned in the Qur'án, including Šálih (Methusaleh), Húd (Heber), Zacharias, Luqman (Æsop), and Dhu'l-Qarnain (Alexander the Great).

Muslim theologians make certain claims concerning the prophets.

(1) They say every prophet is sinless. Some say

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-Ahzáb (xxxiii) 40.

that prophets have no power to sin; others argue that the prophets might have committed wrong before they became inspired, but God had overlooked their fault; others say that Muḥammad merely as an act of humility asked pardon for sin that he might be an example to his followers. But all this is clear casuistry. The Qur'án distinctly states that Adam, Noah and Abraham were distressed about their sin and realized that, if they and their kinsfolk were not forgiven, they would 'surely be of those who perish.' It says that Moses slew the Egyptian and David repented of sin, and in six verses we find Muḥammad's sins referred to. The best known text is this: 'Verily, we have won for thee an undoubted victory—in token that God forgiveth thy earlier and later faults.'<sup>1</sup> That this refers to Muḥammad's own sins and not to the sins of his followers is proved in two traditions. Muḡhaira bin Shiba said: 'The prophet stood up so long in his night prayers as to swell his feet.' It was said to him, 'Why do you perform all this devotion now that all your sins are forgiven first and last?' Muḥammad replied, 'What! shall I not be a grateful servant of God?'<sup>2</sup> In the other tradition we find it stated that Muḥammad will be found worthy to intercede for men on the Judgment Day, because his earlier and later sins had been forgiven.<sup>3</sup>

The one outstanding character in Islám is our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the *only* sinless prophet. There is no passage in the Qur'án that speaks of His seeking

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-Faṭḥ (xlvi) 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Mishkátu'l-Maṣābiḥ*, Book iv, chapter xxiv.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Book xxiii, chapter 12.

forgiveness, and in the traditional books Satan is represented as having said that he was present at the birth of every child except at that of Jesus.

(2) They say that certain prophets were sent with miracles. Moses and Jesus were special wonder-workers, but Muḥammad denied having such power. We read: 'Nothing hindered us from sending thee with the power of working miracles, except that the peoples of old treated them with lies.'<sup>1</sup>

After Muḥammad's death his followers felt that they were at a disadvantage in not being able to relate stories of his wonderful works, so gradually a whole series of miracles were placed to his credit, and with the years were magnified in the most extraordinary manner. It shows how well the Muslims believe the saying that 'It is lawful to exaggerate in the exaltation of Muḥammad.' The miracles of the prophet in round figures are supposed to total 3000, but in a booklet, published at Lahore, we find, 'The authenticated miracles of Muḥammad' to be 252. In this booklet they are related in detail, and most of them are absurdly childish, and not a few of them parody the miracles of our Lord. The most important of Muḥammad's supposed miracles are: (i) The splitting of the moon into two parts, which undoubtedly refers to the power of God at the last day, and not to any power of the prophet.<sup>2</sup> (ii) The Mi'rāj, or Night Ascent to Jerusalem and heaven, mentioned in the Qur'án.<sup>3</sup> That this must have been a dream there is ample proof. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan,

<sup>1</sup> Súratu Bani Isrá'íl (xvii) 61.

<sup>2</sup> Súratu'l-Qamar (liv) 1-2.

<sup>3</sup> Súratu Bani Isrá'íl (xvii) 1.

in his essay on the subject, resents the attitude of Europeans in believing all Muslims to be so gullible as to accept the idea that Muḥammad made a bodily ascent riding on an animal called Borak. Nevertheless practically the whole Muslim world does believe it. (iii) The Qur'án: This is the miracle *par excellence* in Islám, and it was the one sign which the prophet maintained gave full endorsement of his mission, but this has been dealt with in another chapter.

V. *The Last Day and final destinies.*—Bacon in his essay on 'Death,' says: 'Men fear death as children fear to go in the dark, and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other.' If any one knew the truth of this and made the most of it in establishing his cause, it was Muḥammad. His one theme when urging men to repentance and faith, was the judgment to come, and lurid were the pictures which he painted. It is said that 'when he talked of the Day of Judgment his cheeks blazed, and his voice rose; and his manner was fiery.'<sup>1</sup> He called it 'the Hour,' 'the inevitable fact,' 'the great calamity,' 'the day of reckoning,' 'the mighty day.' It would be a time when all would give an account of their actions. Then 'The female child that had been buried alive shall be asked for what crime she was put to death,'<sup>2</sup> and none will be able to hide away from, or deceive, the King of the Day of Doom.

(1) Death comes only at the appointed time which is known to Azrá'íl, who is supposed to approach every person and draw out the spirit up the throat. Then the

<sup>1</sup> Margoliouth, *Mohammed*, p. 127.    <sup>2</sup> Súratu't-Takwír (lxxxix) 8-9

body is placed in the grave where it is interviewed by Munkar and Nakir, who are very huge and very hideous. 'Their eyes are said to be like copper cauldrons, their voices like thunder. . . . In their hands they hold enormous hammers of such weight that, if they were to let them fall down on a mountain, they would grind it to powder. In order that this examination of the dead may take place, God is said to cause the spirit of the dead person to return to its body with its senses and reason and memory.'<sup>1</sup>

Immediately after the grave has been closed in, these angels ask the occupant of the grave 'Who is thy Lord, and what is thy religion and who is thy prophet?' If he fails to pass this test, the angels beat him with their iron hammers or maces and hand him over to ninety-nine dragons which will sting and gnaw and scratch him till the Day of Doom. That the corpse may conveniently sit up in the grave, Muslims the world over keep about three feet of the lower portion of the grave quite hollow, arching it over with masonry or with a platform of boards or bamboos, upon which earth is placed to the surface of the ground. In some countries, devout Muslims remain at the grave for two or three days and recite sacred texts to encourage the guardian angels of the dead man in the fierce contest with the purgatorial inquisitors.

(2) The Resurrection Day.—It is often claimed for Islám that it is a religion without mysteries, which requires no effort for the mind of man to easily understand, but evidently the pagan opponents of Muḥammad

<sup>1</sup> Klein, *The Religion of Islám*, p. 81.

did not think so. Muḥammad had always to encounter strong opposition to his belief in the resurrection of the dead, which he always met by illustrations from the revivifying of nature, particularly the rain changing dry expanses into gardens of verdant freshness, and seeds into resplendent blossoms. But how is the body to rise? The teaching of Islām is that the body which is laid in the grave will dissolve, but that sufficient of the *os sacrum* or 'rump bone' will remain, upon which God will work the miracle of raising up a new body identical with the old. 'Thinketh man that we shall not re-unite his bones? Aye! his very finger tips are we able evenly to replace.' <sup>1</sup>

There are signs of the approach of the 'Hour,' both small and great. The actual time is known to God alone, but among the smaller signs that it is near, we are told there will be the decay of faith among men; that there will be wars and seditions in the world at large, and that the sun will rise in the west. The greater signs include the advent of the Madhī, who it is believed will come and govern the peoples of Islām, and give them their rightful place in the world. The advent of the Antichrist (Dajjāl), who will be a fearful creature moving about on a fearful ass. Then there is the advent of Jesus, the son of Mary, at Damascus, at the time of evening prayer. Muslims say He will come as a Muslim prince to advocate the cause of Muḥammad, kill the Antichrist and all those who believe in the cross and the divine Sonship. He will marry a wife, get children and die after forty years' continuance on earth and be buried

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-Qiyamat (lxxv) 3-4.

at Madína in a grave that has been left open for his sepulture since the days of the first Khalifas.

Of claimants to Mahdíship and Messiahship, the Muslims have lost count. With almost the regularity of the seasons, Egypt has a new crop of them. Two of the most picturesque yet palpably fraudulent of them were Napoleon Bonaparte and the late Mírzá Ghulám of Qádián, Punjab. The latter solved the mystery of the three advents by claiming himself to be both Mahdí and Messiah in one, although he failed to fulfil the predictions of the traditions; and the Antichrist he decided were the Christian missionaries, who move rapidly everywhere on railway trains, which, in his opinion, stood for the huge ass Dajjál is supposed to ride upon.

(3) The blasts of the trumpets.—Muslims say there will be three. One of consternation, one of examination and another of resurrection. The souls of men will repair to their several bodies and then all must appear in the place where the judgment seat will be set up. The books of record will be opened, and a balance prepared wherein mustard seeds will be included among the weights, so that man's good and bad deeds may be weighed with the utmost exactness.<sup>1</sup>

(4) Intercession.—Muslims have this hope, that if all else fails, Muḥammad will intercede for them, although the Qur'án makes it plain that there will be no intercessor. The traditional books, however, are full of the idea that Muḥammad will intercede, but the conception of intercession is most objectionable. It is the eastern idea of the fawning slave trying to get the ear of his

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-Anbiyá' (xxi) 1-48.

master, through the person he thinks to have most power and influence, or through the one who happens to be in favour at the time, and the traditional books have incidents and arguments to prove why Muḥammad's influence will be greater than that of any other prophet. Thank God the intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ is different from that. He is not a lawyer who will know the law well enough to so present his case that the Judge will feel compelled to let us off. He is not going to wait till that day, and then fall prostrate before the Judge of all the earth and with earnest entreaties beg that we be forgiven. Sin must be dealt with before then, and it has been dealt with, for 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.'<sup>1</sup> And it is Christ within God Who is still carrying on His work on our behalf. His intercession is going on now. It has been in progress since His resurrection and it will go on until ours, for His intercession is the prolonged energy of His great and eternal work of redemption.

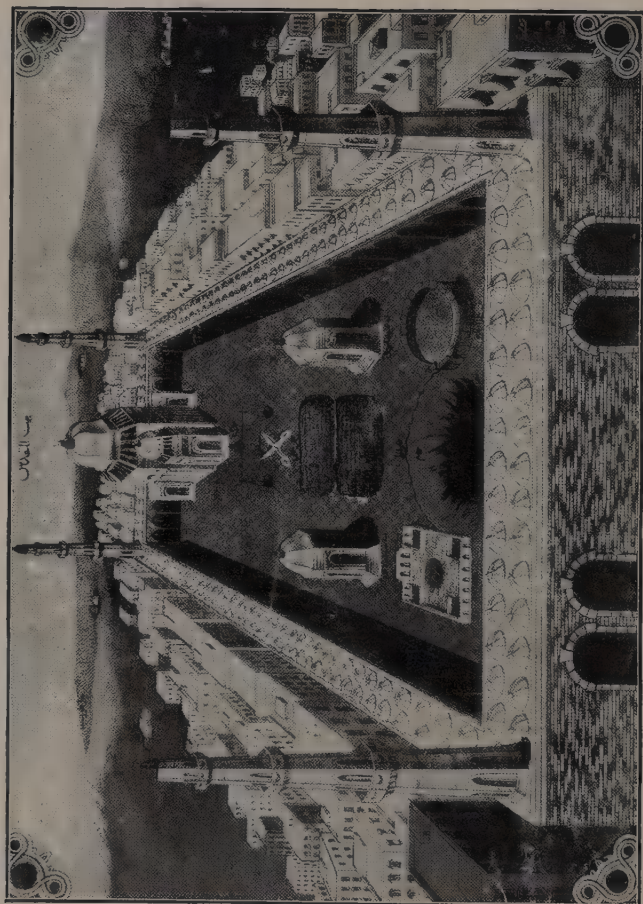
After the Judgment, all men are driven to a bridge called Şirât, swung over the mouth of hell. The bridge is finer than a hair and sharper than the edge of a sword. Those who have done good works will pass over it with ease, but those who have done ill will fall into the great abyss; but now notice a contradiction.

(5) Hell is a place of punishment through which all believers and unbelievers, must pass. 'There is not one of you that shall not go down to it.'<sup>2</sup> Following the Jewish traditions, Muḥammad taught that there are seven hells, one below another, the Muslims having the

<sup>1</sup> II Cor., vi-9    <sup>2</sup> Sūratu Maryam (xix) 1-72.







The popular Muslim idea of what happens after death. (For description, see page 69.)

top one, Jahannam; the Jews the next, Laẓa; the Christians the third, Huḷama; the Ṣábíans the fourth, Satír; the Magi the fifth, Saqar; the idolaters the next, Jahim; but Hawiya (the abyss) is for hypocrites; therefore to idolaters and hypocrites, the people who troubled the prophet most, were given the lowest and hottest places of all.

It is believed that even the most irreligious Muslim will not be allowed to remain long in the place of punishment, but for others the torture will be continuous, and although the body will be consumed, yet it will be renewed repeatedly in order that those punished might suffer continuously, and not escape the endless torture that is their desert. It is evident from this that men need full bodily senses to experience the punishment that Muḥammad taught would be the result of the judgment. They will be 'made to drink from a fountain fiercely boiling. No food shall they have but the fruit of Darih (a bitter thorny scrub) which shall not fatten, nor appease their hunger.'<sup>1</sup> When suggested that the

NOTE.—The drawing on the opposite page represents the popular Muslim idea of man's state after death. The scales are for weighing man's good and bad deeds, the scissors are for cutting out the tongues of all liars; the large black patch in the centre is supposed to be a stone on which Muḥammad placed his foot when descending from heaven, and will be used by God as a throne when He shall judge the world. On either side are the thrones of intercessors. The well is a kind of purgatory, while the square opposite represents the garden of Paradise; between the two may be seen a thin curved line representing the bridge *Ṣirát*, over which the Faithful will cross in safety, but from which the wicked will fall into the fiery flames of hell.

<sup>1</sup> *Súratu'l-Gháshiya* (lxxxviii) 5-7.

fire at present known to man would be hot enough, Muḥammad is supposed to have said, 'Hell-fire has been made more than the fire of the world by sixty-nine parts, every part of which is like the fire of the world.'

(6) Paradise.—As the mirage in the desert painted an illusive beauty that enticed many a weary traveller away from the right path, so the paradise of Islām has been a mirage wrecking the imagination and spiritual perceptions of the Muslims; it has been a devil's snare in the name of religion. What is this paradise? Thos. Moore describes it colloquially and crudely in these lines—'A Persian's heaven is easily made, 'tis but black eyes and lemonade.' The Qur'án says that paradise is a garden of delight where Muslims dressed in green silk robes and rich brocade and adorned with silver bracelets, shall lounge on bridal couches in the shade of trees whose fruits hang low down. Blooming youths go round about them with goblets and ewers and a cup of flowing wine; their brows ache not from it, nor fails the sense, and with such fruits as shall please them best, and with the flesh of such birds as they shall long for: and theirs shall be the Húrís, ever virgins, of equal age, with large dark eyes, like pearls hidden in their shells, in recompense for their labours past.<sup>1</sup> This sensual description of heaven has given rise to a vast number of Muslim books and commentaries of a most objectionable kind, which have made matters worse. As the Muslim description of hell must be taken literally, so that of heaven. Even the spiritually-minded al-Ghazálí accepted it thus, and said that according to

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-Insán (lxxvi) 12-12.

tradition, Muḥammad said, 'The believer in paradise will marry five hundred ḥúris, four thousand virgins and eight thousand divorced women.'

Could there be any reason why Muḥammad described paradise in this way? We think there was:—

(i) Its cool shade would appeal to the Arab rangers who knew only the flaming glare of the sun, and the winds that blew, as Burton says, 'like the breath of a volcano.' They had heard of the palaces and gardens and odalisques in the Persian and Byzantine cities; what could be more gratifying than to describe heaven thus. Syed Amír 'Alí says: 'To the wild, famished Arab, what more grateful, or what more consonant to his idea of paradise, than rivers of unsullied, incorruptible water, or of milk and honey, or anything more acceptable than unbounded fruits, luxuriant vegetation, inexhaustible fertility? He could conceive of no bliss unaccompanied with these sensual pleasures.'<sup>1</sup>

(ii) Muḥammad held it out as one of the inducements to fight for Islám. If any died fighting for the Faith, paradise was assured, there the joys of earth would be intensified, and all the senses would be gratified. In anticipation of a larger license to the lower nature, men in battle prayed and strove for death. The Saracens boasted that 'they loved death more than their foes loved life,' because they were so sure of the martyr's special reward. When in the Indian mutiny, Muḥammadan mutineers were shot from the mouths of guns, one was heard to say, 'In one moment and I shall be in paradise.' Christian martyrs have been known to use

<sup>1</sup> Amír 'Alí, *Life of Muḥammad*, p. 278.

similar language, but the conceptions of the two religionists how very different! In fairness to the Muslims we should add that in the opinion of many the essential joy in heaven will be the vision of God.

VI. *The divine decrees and predestination.*—‘All things we have created after a fixed decree.’<sup>1</sup> The orthodox belief is that whatever happens, whether good or evil, comes from the will of God and His fixed decrees. It was all written down on the ‘preserved table’ from all eternity. Certainly Muḥammad did not formulate this doctrine as it is believed by Muslims to-day. It was one of ‘the after-thoughts of theology.’ Predestination he taught, but he did not attempt to explain it in the Qur’án. It perplexed him, and on more than one occasion he showed strong disapproval when men would discuss it. On the testimony of ‘Áyisha we have it that the Prophet once said in her hearing that ‘Whoever shall speak about predestination will be interrogated on the day of resurrection, and he who does not talk about it will not.’ But the traditions are full of the doctrine, of which we give a specimen—‘When God resolved to create the human race, He took into His hands a mass of earth, the same whence all mankind were to be formed, and in which they after a manner pre-existed; and having then divided the clod into two equal portions, He threw the one-half into hell, saying: “These to eternal fire, and I care not;” and projected the other half into paradise, adding, “And these to paradise, I care not.”’ On this Palgrave remarks: ‘Commentary would here be superfluous. But in this

<sup>1</sup> Súratu’l-Qamar (liv) 49.

we have before us the adequate idea of predestination, or, to give it a truer name, predamnation, held and taught in the school of the Qur'án. Paradise and hell are at once totally independent of love and hatred on the part of the Deity, and of merits or demerits, of good or evil conduct on the part of the creature.' <sup>1</sup>

Passages from the Qur'án could be quoted dealing with the grace of God and man's free-will, for Muḥammad had no system of theology. There are passages, too, which speak of God as a personal, benevolent Being, who is interested in man's affairs, but Muslim theologians, to uphold their teaching of the absoluteness of deity, have made Him an impersonal Power. His will, His power, His decree are paramount; 'the rest is downright inertia and mere instrumentality, from the highest archangel down to the simplest atom of creation.' It is for this reason that Palgrave has called the Muḥammadanism of to-day 'the Pantheism of Force.' Everything, whether good or bad, is the outcome of that Force which the will of Alláh has put into action.

<sup>1</sup> Palgrave, *Central and Eastern Arabia*, vol. i, quoted by Hughes in *The Dictionary of Islám*, p. 148.

## CHAPTER V

### THE RELIGIOUS DUTIES OF ISLÁM

WE have seen that the whole tendency of the belief of Islám is in the direction of fatalism, and man is but the mere instrument in the grip of pure Will or Force, having no option but to submit to the working out of the decrees, and to show loyalty by obeying what arbitrary commands have been given. This has led the Muslim to make mechanical ceremonial the all-important part of submitting to Alláh. Aspiration is crushed out; the making of character and the shaping of destiny have no place; the inner consciousness of the divine presence and the constant working of the Holy Spirit in the soul are discounted. The duties of Islám, therefore, are obligatory practices, with such stress laid upon unimportant external ceremonies that the inner life becomes stultified. The holy man in Islám is the one who performs the duties correctly, let his moral life be what it may, and by all the canons of Muḥammadan Scripture such practice will make him an inheritor of heaven. Thus in Islám, religion and morality may be, and usually are very far apart. 'A highway robber was once brought up for trial in Turkey. When the criminal came into court the judge stepped down from his seat and kissed the man's hand. Though a robber and



murderer he had been several times to Mecca, and was reputed to have repeated the ninety-nine names of God more often than any other living man.'<sup>1</sup>

When a man becomes a Muḥammadan he has to face several tests. He has to undergo the rite of circumcision, recite the Arabic formula concerning Alláh and the Prophet, and perform the duties of Prayer (Namáz), Fasting (Roza), Alms (Zakát), and Pilgrimage (Ḥajj). Five of these duties, called 'the pillars of religion,' or Arkánu'd-dín, we shall now consider.

I. *The Recital of the Creed*.—This is the first lesson to be learnt by the new convert to Islám, and the following conditions are required of him: that it shall be repeated aloud at least once in a lifetime; that the meaning of it shall be fully understood; that it shall be believed in by the heart; that it shall be professed until death; that it shall be recited correctly; that it shall be always professed and declared without hesitation.<sup>2</sup>

II. *Prayer*.—Muḥammad was a firm believer in and an observer of prayer. It is said that he often rose in the night and spent hours in this act of devotion, and considered that the worst of thieves were those who stole from their own prayers. From the traditions it would appear that he often uttered petitions for pardon and mercy, for a true tongue and freedom from debt, and preservation from cowardice, hypocrisy and avarice, but the prescribed prayers used by Muslims five times a day are little more than ascriptions of praise to Alláh and therefore come very far short of the Christian's idea of

<sup>1</sup> Jessop, *The Muḥammadan Missionary Problem*.

<sup>2</sup> Hughes, *The Dictionary of Islám*, p. 63.

prayer. In Christian prayer there is not only praise and adoration but also confession, petition, and aspiration. In connexion with ablutions before prayer, however, petition is common, the Muslim asking, with the cleansing of almost every part, to be made ready for the day of doom, and saved from hell fire.

There are certain practices essential to the correct performance of prayer.

(1) The call (Adhán).—In many a large town in India, it is a common thing to hear in the evening hour the different calls to prayer; the bell of the Christian church, the conch of the Hindu temple and the oral call of the Muslim Mu'adhhdhin. Often the latter is the most pleasing to the ear. It appears that soon after Muḥammad arrived in Madína, he was exercised as to how he should call his followers to prayer. The lighting of fires and the use of the Jewish trumpet were proposed, as was also the bell of the Christians, which in that day was made of a long oblong piece of wood and struck with a hammer, the same as that used to-day in the monasteries of the Levant; but Muḥammad decided upon the human voice as the best instrument, and the son of an Abyssynian slave-girl, Bilál by name, who had suffered great torture because of his faith, was chosen as the first Mu'adhhdhin or crier. To his memory, perhaps, in the Dutch East Indies, Bilál is the name given to the majority of Mu'adhhdhins.<sup>1</sup> To-day the Mu'adhhdhin is almost universal, his summons being heard even in some of the principal cities of the West. The call varies little the world over. It says: '*God is most great! I witness*

<sup>1</sup> *The Encyclopedia of Islám*, p. 719.

*that there is no god but God, and Muḥammad is the Apostle of God! Come to prayer! Come to salvation! God is most great! There is no god but God!*' A dawn is added the reminder—'*Prayer is better than sleep!*'

(2) The cleansing.—Muḥammad is supposed to have said that 'Ablution is the key to prayer' and 'God accepts no prayer without ablution.' He laid down the following rule, 'O Believers! when ye address yourselves to prayer, wash your faces, and your hands, and your feet to the ankles. And if ye have become unclean, then purify yourselves. . . If ye find no water, then take clean sand and rub your faces and your hands with it.'<sup>1</sup> From this verse it is easy for Muslims to prove the necessity for the three principal forms of cleansing, namely, Waḍú, or partial ablution, which is commonly practised before prayer; Ghusl, or the complete cleansing of the whole body; and Tayammum, or purification by sand.

To perform all the rules of purification requires the most careful attention to detail. The head, face, teeth, nostrils, neck, hands, arms and feet all receive attention before prayer, and everything must be done with perfect exactness, for one mistake made will spoil the effect of all the prayers that are about to be said. The Rev. Canon Sell well says: 'That there may be spiritually-minded men in Islám is not to be denied: but a system of religion which declares that the virtue of prayer depends practically on an ablution, and that that ablution is useless unless done in the order prescribed, is one calculated

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 9.

to make men formalists and nothing more. It comes to this, that, if a man when making Waḍú washes his left hand before his right, or his nose before his teeth, he cannot lawfully say the daily Namáz enjoined on all Muslims. None but those who have studied Muslim treatises on the subject can conceive of the puerile discussions which have taken place on points apparently trivial, but which from their connexion with the Sunnat are deemed by learned Muslims of great importance.’<sup>1</sup>

Muḥammad taught that sin is a pollution that clings to the body, and water removes such pollution. We read: ‘He sent down upon you water from heaven that He might thereby cleanse you and cause the pollution of Satan to pass from you.’<sup>2</sup> This may account for the many petitions said during the performance of ablution and the few in the actual prayers.

(3) The direction of prayer.—In the early days of his stay at Madína, Muḥammad uttered a glorious truth concerning prayer. He said: ‘The East and the West is God’s: therefore whichever way ye turn, there is the Face of God.’<sup>3</sup> But Muslim commentators tell us that this text has been abrogated and Alláh wishes men to forget it since further on in the Súra it says: ‘We have seen thee turning thy face towards every part of heaven; but we will have thee turn to a Qibla which shall please thee. Turn then thy face towards the sacred mosque (i.e. the Ka‘ba), and wheresoever ye be, turn your faces towards that part.’<sup>4</sup> Hence the mosques have niches, the prayer-mats have marks, the travellers

<sup>1</sup> Sell, *The Faith of Islám*, p. 191.   <sup>2</sup> Súratu’l-Anfál (viii) 11.

<sup>3</sup> Súratu’l-Baqara (ii) 109.   <sup>4</sup> Ibid (ii) 139.

have compasses—all of which are made to point to Mecca. The direction of prayer must be strictly observed, and it is interesting to watch when travelling on steamers how Muḥammadans immediately change the direction of their prayer if the position of the steamer is changed by the winding of a river.

(4) The place of prayer.—prayer varies in merit to the one performing it according to place. Muḥammad is supposed to have said: ‘The prayers of a man in his own house are equal to the reward of one prayer; but in the mosque being near his house, equal to twenty-five prayers; and if in the public mosque, equal to five hundred prayers; and in Jerusalem, equal to 50,000, and in my mosque, equal to 50,000, and in the Ka’ba, equal to 100,000.’<sup>1</sup> Following the line of this tradition, many unable to leave their homes pray twenty-five times in order to gain the same merit as the rest of the congregation.

(5) The time of prayer.—Having performed the ablutions and put on clean clothes, the Muslim covers his head, doffs his shoes and goes to pray. This must be done five times a day, at sunset or a few minutes later; when it has become quite dark; at day-break, a little after noon, when the sun has begun to decline; and in the middle of the afternoon. With machine-like movements the Muslim accompanies his Namáz with a drill which is not easy to describe with his various standing, kneeling, half-bending and squatting postures. One who is in closet touch with the Muslim world says: ‘Prayer is taught to the small boy of seven as a drill, and

<sup>1</sup> Osborn, *Islám under the Khalifs of Baghdad*.

a drill it largely remains. These five daily prayers are, indeed, classified as a "work" or "duty," and this classification affects the whole way in which they are instinctively regarded.' <sup>1</sup>

But in this as in the various practices of purification the smallest mistake undoes the efficacy of the observance. Among the Muḥammadans of Bengal there is a popular belief, based upon some traditional saying of Muḥammad, that the punishment for one neglect of prayer will be eighty hakbas in hell. It takes eighty years to cover the period of one hakba, then 6,400 years will be the punishment for one sin against the Muslim law of prayer. Who then among them can reasonably expect to be saved?

There are many traditions giving the reason why five prayers a day were demanded of men. We give one which is universally accepted by Muslims as correct, it being related by several of the most reliable traditionists. The incident is supposed to have happened at the time of the night-ascent to heaven. Dr. Koelle translates it as follows: 'It is also authentic that that Excellency said, "When I was returning from the Throne of Glory and met Moses, he asked me, how many prayers were enjoined upon thee and thy people? I answered, fifty for one day and night. Moses said, Verily thy people will not be able to perform prayers fifty times in one day; for I knew people before thee, and have tried the children of Israel; return therefore to the Lord's Throne, and solicit an alleviation for thy

<sup>1</sup> *International Review of Missions*, Article by the Rev. W. H. T. Gairdner, vol. i, p. 48.

people. I went back and had ten taken off. On telling Moses of it, he advised me to seek a further reduction. So I went back again and again, and had each time ten more taken off, till the fifth time, when only five were taken off, so that five remained. Moses thought them still too many, and wished to induce me to return once more." But I answered: "I have already returned to my Lord so often that I am quite ashamed; I will return no more, but be content and satisfied and walk in the way of resignation."<sup>1</sup> What clearer evidence is needed that prayer with the Muslim is the coin demanded as tribute by the great Taskmaster.'

The prayers must be said in Arabic, a language as familiar to three-fourths of the Muslims as Latin is to the Roman Catholic villagers of Ireland or South America. Muḥammadans have been sometimes excommunicated, because they ventured to say the prayers in their mother-tongue.<sup>2</sup>

There is one day of the week wherein prayer is most meritorious, and that is Friday. On that day, called 'The day of the assembly,' all should quit their business for a time at midday and assemble with others to pray and listen to two or three *khutbas* or sermons containing passages from the Qur'án, prayers and injunctions to piety. This special day cannot be compared with the Christian or Jewish days of rest and worship.

III. *Alms*.—The giving of alms is incumbent upon all the faithful and is closely allied to purification and

<sup>1</sup> Koelle, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, pp. 313-4.

<sup>2</sup> For a fatwá on this point, see Sell, *The Faith of Islám*, pp. 248-52.

prayer ; it is mentioned in over eighty passages of the Qur'án. In connexion therewith, we read : ' Whatsoever good thing ye shall have given in alms, shall be repaid to you, and ye shall not be wronged. There are among you the poor, who being shut up to fighting for the cause of God, have it not in their power to strike out into the earth for riches.'<sup>1</sup> But almsgiving was not a voluntary thing. It was a ' legal impost ' <sup>2</sup> established in the first instance for the strengthening and maintaining of the new Church-state. Those who defended the cause needed support, and the old, weak and poor required help. For receiving the amounts, tax collectors were appointed, and still in some Muslim countries Zakát is collected as a religious tax for the upkeep of institutions for the spread of the Faith. The proportion to be given is about one-fortieth of the total income ; that means, not merely on money, but on animals, such as camels, oxen and horses, on corn, dates and raisins, and on whatever is sold. To-day there is a philanthropic and voluntary giving to the poor quite apart from Zakát.

Some devout souls have often felt some difficulty about the deductions to be made, so eager have they been to keep the letter of the law. A sister of Bishr, a famous holy man of Baghdád, was troubled about the exact amount to be deducted for alms from the profits of her spinning. She went to the great Imám Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, than whom there was no greater jurist in the Muslim world, and said : ' I spin at night by candle-light, and as it sometimes happens my candle goes out, and I spin by the light of the moon ; is it incumbent

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 247.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 277.



upon me to separate the portion spun by the light of the candle from that spun by the light of the moon?' She meant, of course, that the cotton spun by the light of the moon had cost less than that which had the value of the candle expended upon it. It was a very fine point. We imagine the Imám was non-plussed for the moment. He replied: 'If you think there is difference between them, it is incumbent upon you to separate them.'

IV. *Fasting*.—We question very much whether the average Muslim understands the true use and meaning of fasting. To him Ramaḍán, the ninth month of the Muslim year, means a thirty days' fast wherein he must abstain from eating, drinking, smoking and certain enjoyments each day from sunrise to sunset. It was in this month that Muḥammad used to retire to Hīrá, and, on the night al-Qadr of the same month, he is supposed to have received his first revelation. 'As to the month Ramaḍán, in which the Qur'án was sent down to be man's guidance . . . as soon as any of you observeth the moon, let him set about the fast.'<sup>1</sup>

This fast is very painful to endure, especially for the labouring classes in all hot countries, but it must fail of its purpose since the constant thought during the day, of Bengal villagers, at any rate, is that at dusk they will be able to eat and drink and smoke and revel as much as they like till morning starts the agony again.

The relative value of prayer, almsgiving and fasting may be understood from a saying by the Khalífa 'Umar, He said: 'Prayer will bring a man half-way to God,

<sup>1</sup> 'Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 181.

fasting to the door of His palace, but it is to alms that he will owe his admission.'

There are feasts as well as fasts to be observed. The 'Idu'l-Fiṭr follows immediately upon the fast and is the feast of the breaking of the fast. It is a very festive occasion. Another great feast day is that on which Baqr-'id or 'The feast of sacrifice' is held. Cows, camels or goats may be sacrificed. The sacrifice is said to be in commemoration of Abraham's offer of 'a sheep' instead of his son. Another festival is the Muḥarram, which is a mournful commemoration of the martyrdoms of 'Alí and his sons Ḥasan and Ḥusain. There is much in the observance of this feast that is objectionable, particularly the bitter enmity aroused among the Shi'ah Muslims, the partisans of 'Alí, and the Sunnī Muslims, who are opposed to their claims.

V. *Pilgrimage*.—One of the main reasons why the Quraish were so opposed to Muḥammad and his new doctrine, was the material loss that would be theirs, if the ancient pagan pilgrimage were discontinued. Muḥammad saw this and allowed the pilgrimage to remain but with new explanations of all the rites. And this was easily done since there were innumerable Abrahamic legends which he was able to utilize and adapt. In the Ka'ba he recognized a temple built by Adam after an original pattern seen in heaven; it was destroyed in the flood but rebuilt by Abraham and Ishmael. The running up and down a side street between Mounts Ṣafá and Marwa was associated with Hagar's distracted search for water, while the well Zem Zem became the traditional spring from which water was obtained that saved the hapless boy Ishmael's life.

But all these places, so sacred in the eyes of the faithful, are not for the eyes of the outside world. Even the physical aspect of the country helps to keep the exclusiveness sure. Gervais-Courtellemont, one of the few Europeans who at great risk of life have entered Mecca, says: 'Beyond the East known to Europeans, far away in the heart of Arabia, enfolded in the depth and mystery of deserts, lies Mecca, the holy town of Islám. It lies in the hollow of a savage valley, straitened between two sharp and arid mountain chains, as if Nature had conspired with the Musalmán faith to hide its secrets from the profane.'<sup>1</sup>

Mecca is sixty-five miles from the port of Jiddah on the Red Sea, and 250 miles from Madína. To visit this sacred city at least once in a lifetime is the duty of every Muḥammadan. 'The Pilgrimage to the temple (i.e. the Ka'ba) is a service due to God from those who are able to journey thither.'<sup>2</sup>

Briefly, the conditions and rites of pilgrimage are these: It must be performed by Muḥammadans only, all known Christians found in the sacred territory being given the option of embracing Islám, or suffering death. The Muḥammadan must be a free man, and of age, that is, he must have completed his fifteenth year. He must be physically and mentally sound and should have no debts. A woman may perform the pilgrimage, if accompanied by her father, or her husband or brother or any other man who is privileged to see her unveiled.

Outside Mecca, the pilgrim changes his ordinary

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Ralli's *Christians at Mecca*, p. 244.

<sup>2</sup> Súratu 'Áli 'Imrán (iii) 91; see Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 191-9.

clothing for the pilgrim dress, then facing Mecca he uses words that are constantly on his lips during his sojourn in the sacred precincts. He says Labbaik ! ' I am here ! I am here !'

Verily, here am I, O Alláh ! here I am !

Verily, here am I ! O Alláh, Thou hast no partner !

Verily, here am I, O Alláh ! All praise and glory to Thee !

Verily, here am I ! O Alláh, Thou hast no partner !

Upon entering the city the pilgrim performs the legal ablutions and then encompasses the Ka'ba, three times quickly and four times slowly. He then kisses or touches the Black Stone. Prayer is then made at 'the Place of Abraham,' where is recited the words of the Qur'án, 'Take ye the station of Abraham for a place of prayer.'<sup>1</sup> After that he drinks from the well Zem Zem and returns to kiss the Black Stone. After this follows the running between Şafá and Marwa and the listening to sermons in the mosque and at 'Arafát, and the stoning of the devil at Miná, where also the Baqr-íd sacrifice is made. After the Meccan rites are over, about one-fourth of the pilgrims proceed to Madína to see the tomb of the Prophet and pray there. The majority cannot go as the journey is expensive and very troublesome. From Syria to Madína, however, travel has become easy and comfortable since the Sultán of Turkey has built a grand trunk line from Damascus, a distance of over one thousand miles, and now the pilgrim trains have many a convenience, including a mosque carriage set apart for the pilgrims' prayer.

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 119.

Burckhardt, Burton and Hurgonje, three of the men who have given us full details of their visit to Mecca, say that the town is in every way a most undesirable place, blatant immorality pervading the streets and even the mosque. Bad government, bribery and corruption are rampant. The residents from the Sharíf down live by exploiting the pilgrims. One clique holds the key of the Ka'ba door, and it is only gold that may give it a turn in the lock. Another clique sells the old curtain every year, that covers completely the outside of the temple-building, a square inch of which sometimes realizes the sum of forty-five rupees. To be able to buy enough of this covering for making a waistcoat is the ambition of every pilgrim. Another clique has the monopoly of the water of the Zem Zem well, and from its sale they become rich like the Doms of Benares who hold the right of selling wood for the burning of the Hindu dead.

A Muḥammadan who has been on pilgrimage is called Hájí, which in some countries means more honour to the one possessing the title than in others. In some it is a signal of warning to beware of a sharper, but in others it is a sign of one who has been as near to heaven as it is possible to go in this life, and therefore is one who must be shown the greatest honour.

VI. *Religious War (Jihád.)*—This is yet another important religious duty, although not usually placed in the list with the main 'pillars of religion.' Islám is the religion of the sword, and it is the duty of all Muslims to fight for their faith. They have the monopoly in the next world, why should not they in this? The Qur'án says: 'Fight against them (the unbelievers) until . . . the only worship be that of

God.'<sup>1</sup> 'I will cast a dread into the hearts of the infidels. Strike off their heads then, and strike off from them every finger-tip.'<sup>2</sup> 'Fight against them till . . . the religion be all of it God's.'<sup>3</sup> 'Kill those who join other gods with God wherever ye shall find them, . . . but if they shall convert, and observe prayer, and pay the obligatory alms, then let them go their way.'<sup>4</sup> In this last verse permission is given to kill unbelievers 'wherever' found, that is, within or without sacred territory, a command that violated a strict law of the pre-Islamic Arabs, and also abrogates—we should say contradicts—a former verse<sup>5</sup> which says that war should not be made in sacred territory. Further this verse, which is known as the 'verse of the sword,' is said to refute and contradict as many as 125 verses scattered through sixty-three chapters which commend the pardon of those who are not Muslims.<sup>6</sup>

This change of policy and revelation was the result of new power gained at Madína. Muḥammad was no longer the 'mere warner' of Mecca where he had preached that there should be 'no compulsion in religion',<sup>7</sup> but the leader of a wild band of plundering, booty-loving Bedouins. At Mecca, he had been the master of an overpowering idea, but now in addition he had a sword, and he was quick to use it. By his command no fewer than forty-six expeditions were undertaken, and he himself took part in nine of them,<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 189.

<sup>2</sup> Súratu'l-Anfál (viii) 12.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. (viii) 40.

<sup>4</sup> Súratu't-Tauba (ix) 5.

<sup>5</sup> Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 214.

<sup>6</sup> Vide Appendix to Sale's *Preliminary Discourse* (C.L.S.).

<sup>7</sup> Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 257. <sup>8</sup> See *Ghazwas and Sariyas* (C.L.S.)

and when some of his followers were not over-zealous in war, he said: 'Be not faint-hearted; and invite not the infidels to peace when ye have the upper hand.'<sup>1</sup> Then the Jews and Christians were to be attacked if they did not accept what Muḥammad said was the truth 'until they pay tribute out of hand, and be humbled.'<sup>2</sup>

Muḥammadans trained in Western education try to prove that the sword is never used except in self-defence, and that force in religion is contrary to Muslim belief. Syed Aḥmad Khán, however, admits its use. He says: 'Muḥammadanism grasped the sword, not to destroy all infidels and pagans, not to force men to become Muslims at the sword's point, but only to proclaim that eternal truth in the unity of the Godhead throughout the whole extent of the then known globe.'<sup>3</sup> That is mere juggling with words. Arnold, a writer of ability and scholarship, has sought in an appreciative spirit to prove that the marvellous growth of Islám was the result, not of Jihád but of 'the unremitted labours of Muslim missionaries, who, with the Prophet himself as their great example, have spent themselves for the conversion of unbelievers.'<sup>4</sup> But in regard to the Muslim crusaders who invaded India, he is forced to confess that with them the 'proselytizing sword . . . seems to have served no other purpose than that of sending infidels to hell.'<sup>5</sup> It is often contended that the commands to fight found in the Qur'án, if not taken away from their context, never

<sup>1</sup> Súratu Muḥammad (xlvii) 37.

<sup>2</sup> Súratu'l-'Ankabút (ix) 29.

<sup>3</sup> Syed Aḥmad Khán, *Life of Muhammad*.

<sup>4</sup> Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 210.

prove that unbelievers must be attacked. But whether Muḥammad's commands were only for the time of the battle, described in the Qur'án, or for all time, matters little, when his followers of every age hunt up his every precept and practice and go and act accordingly. Ruskin, describing the Yemen sword, says : 'Ornament it carried none, save the notches on the blade.' A Muslim proverb runs : 'If the Sultán's sword be not kept bright, the mirror of religion will grow dim.'

Muḥammad's body was scarcely cold in death before the Companions of the Prophet, who must have known the mind of their master well, waged war in all directions. Abú Bakr, the first Khalífa, in his inaugural address said : 'Leave not off to fight in the ways of the Lord ; whosoever leaveth off, him verily shall the Lord abase.'<sup>1</sup> There is no surer commentary on the religious war-note in Islám than the history of the Rightly-guided Khalífas, Abú Bakr and 'Umar. It is full of battles, carnage, blood, rapine and spoils, carried out under their instructions, by the great general Khalíd, who was known as 'the Sword of God.'

Dr. Snouck Hurgronje, one of the leading authorities on Islám to-day, who had the great distinction of studying the subject first-hand in Mecca itself, says : 'The supreme cause for the spread of the faith, both according to the letter and the spirit of the sacred law, must be found in methods of forcible propagandism. The Muslim law considers all non-Muslims as the enemies of the great monarchy of Alláh, whose opposition to His rule—which is solely by Muslims—must be broken down . . .

<sup>1</sup> Muir, *Annals of the Early Caliphate*, p. 6.



The little group of modern Muslims who assert that Islám must only be propagated by preaching and conviction, no more represent the true teaching of their religion in which they were born, than the modernists do the Roman Catholic Church.’<sup>1</sup>

Where people did not submit to Islám, they were either put to death or subjected to great humiliation and the paying of a capitation tax. A study of the histories of Armenia, Syria, Egypt, Greece and India in the period of Muḥammadan domination will prove conclusively that wherever Islám conquers a people, it also humiliates and reduces to a condition of abject subjection and stagnation.

It may be objected that Christianity was not slow to use the sword and methods of persecution when once it had the power. We must admit that Christians have done particular acts both cruel and treacherous, and there are incidents in the history of the Crusades to the Holy Land that most Christians would like very much to forget. But Christians leave off doing such things when the Christian conscience asserts itself. Some Christians may be bad, degraded, even devilish, but so long as they have the Bible with the character and teaching of Jesus, so long they have that which may at any moment revive within them His spirit, whereas Muslims may never rise above their doctrine of the sword. Even to-day in Muḥammadan lands Muslims offer this infamous petition against non-Muslims in the regular Friday prayers, assented to by every worshipper with a

<sup>1</sup> Hurgronje, *Nederland en de Islam*, quoted in *The Moslem World*, vol. pp. 444-5.

loud Amen, '*God ! make widows of their wives and orphans of their children, and give their possession to be a possession for the Muslims.*'

## CHAPTER VI

### CERTAIN LAWS OF ISLÁM

THERE are certain laws of permission and prohibition which every Muslim must be careful to observe, and they must be as strictly adhered to as the religious duties noticed in the last chapter. In fact, laws governing the religious life and those of civil procedure are all of a piece, an essential part of Islám. A Muslim would never think of separating them as the Christian does, and in his law books every law is dealt with equally, whether it be the law of inheritance or the law of correct prayer and fasting. The Muslim is literally 'under the law,' in the extremest sense, from the cradle to the grave in every phase of his life.

I. *Laws concerning Social Life.*—Instead of these being made upon sound principles by communities concerned, as the locality and circumstances necessitate, they were made and stereotyped for all time in the following ways: by enactments given in the Qur'án, by reputed decisions made by the Prophet or by his own action and example, and failing these, by the findings of the authoritative jurists. Here are a few of the definite laws:—

(1) Marriage and divorce.—Marriage is a legal contract enjoined upon every Muslim. Celibacy is discountenanced. Even the members of the ascetic Orders marry.

But the rules of marriage and the whole relationship between the sexes in Islám are most objectionable. Here is one text from the Qur'án which has meant untold ruin to womanhood, manhood and childhood. It says: 'Of women who seem good in your eyes, marry but two, or three or four; and if ye fear that ye shall not act equitably (to so many) then one only; or the slaves whom ye have acquired.'<sup>1</sup> This is a clear law permitting polygamy.

The Qur'án gives one important exception to this law. Muḥammad was not bound by it. A supposed revelation allowed him 'any believing woman who hath given herself up to the prophet, if the prophet desired to wed her—a privilege for thee above the rest of the faithful.'<sup>2</sup> He married altogether eleven wives and had three concubines, only three of whom predeceased him. Many have been the excuses put forth to screen the Prophet from the sin of licentiousness. Some mention his desire for male issue; others have put his conjugal excesses down to his charitable disposition towards poor women who were wanting a home.<sup>3</sup> But his followers might have desired more than the allotted number of wives for the same reason, then why should they not be favoured!

A Muḥammadan may not take an idolatress to wife, but he is permitted to marry Christian and Jewish women. In this Muḥammad showed sagacity. While a Christian or Jewish woman might retain her faith, the children must be brought up in the faith of Islám. Muslim women, on the other hand, were not allowed to

<sup>1</sup> See Súratu'n-Nisá' (iv) 3.

<sup>2</sup> Súratu'l-Aḥzáb (xxxiii) 49.

<sup>3</sup> Sell, *The Life of Muḥammad* (C.L.S.), pp. 184-5 and note.

marry men of another faith, because there would be a danger of their going over to their husband's religion. Women are given the right to refuse to marry any man they do not care for, but that right is rarely exercised. Wives may be punished by their husbands when disobedient or obstinate; <sup>1</sup> they should be beaten until they feel pain, but no bones should be broken.

The permission to divorce is as definite as the permission to marry, but that it should be only for some serious thing, as fornication, or even incompatibility, there appears to be no rule. The reason for exercising the right of divorce is left with the man himself, who regards divorce as a special privilege given to him by the Creator; hence a quarrel, poverty, sickness, infirmity or anything else may serve as a flimsy pretext to action, and there is no necessity for him to state the reason for his action. To divorce a wife and take a new one every year, which is common in some lands and even oftener, is bad enough, but the laws laid down in connexion with the retaking of a divorced wife are degrading in the extreme. The Qur'án says: 'Ye may divorce your wives twice,' and take them back again if both parties are agreed, without any one to interfere, 'but if the husband divorce her a third time, it is not lawful for him to take her again, until she shall have married another husband; and if he also divorce her then shall no blame attach to them if they return to each other.' <sup>2</sup> Muḥammad could not have anticipated the result of such a rule. It has brought in the iniquitous system of

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'n-Nisá' (iv) 38.

<sup>2</sup> Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 229-30.

employing men, called Mustahíll, whose one duty is to make marriage lawful. For this purpose the husband often seeks an ugly black, blind or old man, who is likely to speedily pronounce the necessary words of divorce, because of the wife's dislike of him, after the necessary conditions have been fulfilled.<sup>1</sup>

In lands influenced by Western thought the practices of polygamy and divorce have been steadily decreasing amongst the better classes, but among the lower and illiterate class divorce is still common.

To-day enlightened Muḥammadans are ashamed of polygamy and the evils which follow such a practice, and are trying to improve the status of womanhood. To quote again an Indian writer: 'We cannot have a very high regard for womankind with a system which sanctions four wives. Polygamy is destructive alike of domestic peace and social purity. Nor can we have a sound basis for family life with women sunk in the deepest ignorance and the wildest superstitions.'<sup>2</sup> In Egypt, especially, is the emancipation of women advocated by a reform party. They follow the lead of Syed Amír 'Alí, who says: 'Whatever may have been the necessity for polygamy in the earliest stages of society, in modern times it can only be regarded as an unmitigated and unendurable evil.'<sup>3</sup> But he goes further; he says: 'For my own part, I look upon polygamy in the present day as an adulterous connexion.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See E. W. Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, p. 187 (Everyman's Library).

<sup>2</sup> S. Khuda Bukhsh, *Essays: Indian and Islamic*, p. 231.

<sup>3</sup> Syed Amír 'Alí, *The Muhammadan Law*, vol. ii. (Preface).

<sup>4</sup> Syed Amír 'Alí, *The Spirit of Islam*, p. 216

(2) Slavery.—Slavery is the inevitable corollary of Polygamy. It was common in Arabia before Islám, but Muḥammad, instead of abolishing it, perpetuated it. We admit that he tried to mitigate the evil; he commanded that slaves should be treated kindly, fed and clothed properly and freed when justice could not be done them; but that does not remove the stigma that must for ever remain upon the founder of Islám that he allowed the system to continue, and thus gave a loophole for man to show 'inhumanity to man' in the name of religion by carrying on the most diabolical traffic the world has ever known. But we are told that there is very little degradation attached to the condition of slaves in most Muslim countries. That may be true in regard to many male slaves, and we know from history that slaves have risen to positions of trust. They have made dynasties in Egypt and India, and in our own day Chitrali slaves have had most to do with the affairs of government in Afghánistán, but the condition of female slaves is of the worst, when all may be compelled to become the concubines of their masters, who may sell or exchange them at will.

Since Livingstone by his appeal to help enslaved Africa—that 'open sore of the world'—aroused the conscience of Christian nations, European governments have done much towards putting down the slave trade, but it still exists, and tens of thousands of men, women and children, are being sold annually in the great slave-markets of 'the House of Islám.' For centuries, Muḥammadans obtained their supply of slaves through the wars they waged, and that method of obtaining them was in keeping with the letter of the Qur'án; but often these wars were little more than slave raids, in which thousands of

white women were enslaved by the Arabs and Turks and sent to the harems. In 1816, indignant Europe closed the markets of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli, and now since the military power of the Turks has been broken, white women are not easily obtainable, so they have fallen back on the black. Abyssinia and the Súdán are the lands from which slaves are now largely drawn. A political officer who crossed the Şahara in 1906, and marched along one of the most important of the slave routes, tells of 'bleaching skeletons of man and beasts. That thin white line marks the whole length of the dreary road to the South, punctuated at intervals by the old camping-places of the great caravans.' That these caravans were more like moving villages of large dimensions, may be imagined from the fact that 'the larger caravans often had over five hundred children. The pitifully small skeletons still lie everywhere along the road. Neither vulture nor hyena has touched them, only the soft desert sand has collected around them and polished the white bones.'<sup>1</sup> The traders were well satisfied with their profits if only twenty per cent of their victims survived the long terrible journey from freedom to slavery.

The largest slave market in the world is situated close alongside the Ka'ba in Mecca. In one Morocco market it is estimated that 2,600 slaves were sold annually and not less than 10,000 were bought and sold in the Morocco Sultán's dominions in the course of the year. A European visitor to the slave market of Marrakesh, in Morocco, gives a graphic account of the proceedings. He says: 'In Marrakesh, now, dealers buy the healthiest slaves they can find and raise as many children as is

<sup>1</sup> Hanns Fischer, *Across the Şahará*, pp. 220-38.







Slave-market auctioneers in Morocco offering prayers before starting the sales.

possible. Then, so soon as the children are old enough to sell, they are sold, and when the mothers grow old and have no more children they too are sold, but they do not fetch much then. From six years old they are sold to be companions (of free children), and from twelve they go to the harems.'<sup>1</sup>

In Constantinople and other places in the Ottoman Empire, there is no public slave market now. European influence has driven the traffic to the privacy of the harems, where it is carried on by ladies of rank, and the profits they realize from the trade is considerable. Circassian and Georgian girls have been the favourites in Turkey, but Armenian girls live ever in dread of being abducted and shut up in the harems. As a check upon this practice, many of them have the sign of the Cross cut in the skin of their forehead, knowing that, as the Muḥammadans hate the Cross, they are not likely to retain women long who are disfigured in this way :—

Ah, Saints ! the bare and bleeding feet !  
Ah, Christ ! the bruised and bleeding hands !  
Ah, God ! the pallid faces there !  
One low, long sob goes through the street,  
One passionate curse God understands,  
One bitter agony of prayer.

We would that every Indian Muslim might be as pronounced against this iniquitous traffic as Syed Amír 'Alí is. He says: 'Slavery . . . like polygamy has existed among all nations, and has died away with the progress of human thought and the growth of a sense of justice among mankind. Like polygamy it was the natural

<sup>1</sup> *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, Article by S. L. Bensusan.

product of passion and pride. . . . It bears from its outset the curse of inherent injustice.'<sup>1</sup> While he denounces slavery in such strong language, he teaches that it was a mere temporary institution and is entirely opposed to *The Spirit of Islám*. With this we do not agree. Slavery will remain an important part of Islám in every land where the Law of the Qur'án has supreme sway. Hughes says: 'Slavery is interwoven with the law of marriage, the law of sale, and the law of inheritance, of the system, and its abolition would strike at the very foundations of the code of Muḥammadanism.'<sup>2</sup>

II. *Laws pertaining to Food*.—In the East much has been made of rules concerning eating and drinking. Great space is given to them in the codes of Manu and Moses, and Muḥammad appears to have adopted the Mosaic code almost in its entirety.

(1) Meats.—Muḥammad forbad all foods forbidden by Moses, with the exception of the flesh of the camel, which is daily used in Arabia for food. He said: 'That which dieth of itself, and blood, and swine's flesh, and all that hath been sacrificed under the invocation of any other name than that of God, and the strangled, and the killed by a blow, or by a fall, or by goring, and that which hath been eaten by beasts of prey, unless ye make it clean by giving the death stroke yourselves, and that which hath been sacrificed on the blocks of stones, is forbidden you.'<sup>3</sup> All scaly fish are allowed; oysters, tortoises and turtles are forbidden. Exception is made in the case of a man who may not be in a position to

<sup>1</sup> Syed Amír 'Alí, *The Spirit of Islám*, p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> Hughes, *Dictionary of Islám*, p. 600.

<sup>3</sup> Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 4.

get any but prohibited food. 'He who shall partake of them by constraint without lust or wilfulness, no sin shall be upon him. Verily God is Indulgent, Merciful.'<sup>1</sup>

(2) Drinks.—The Qur'án says: 'Surely wine is an abomination of Satan's work.'<sup>2</sup> This is said to cover all kinds of strong and inebriating liquors, though there are passages which seem to teach that there is some advantage in wine-drinking, but the Prophet said that the sin of taking it 'is greater than the advantage.'<sup>3</sup> The opinion of the majority is that intoxicating drinks are always absolutely unlawful, and from the Khalífa 'Umar's stern punishment of wine-drinkers,<sup>4</sup> we can imagine it to be a terrible sin to some Muḥammadans. Opium, Indian hemp and other narcotics are alike unlawful, because they blur the imagination and disturb the understanding. Certain strict Muslims say that tobacco and coffee should be added to the list of prohibited things, but some of the faithful, according to Doughty, the famous Arabian traveller, take little of anything else. He tells of men he had met who drank as many as fifty cups of coffee in the twenty-four hours and smoked as many pipes of tobacco.

It must not be imagined that these laws are strictly kept in every part of the Muslim world. In some places Muḥammadans breed pigs and cure hams for the family consumption.<sup>5</sup> In Persia, Turkey and Egypt, wine-drinking is common and drunkenness on the increase. In India, drinking among Muslims was in the days of the

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 168.

<sup>2</sup> Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 92.

<sup>3</sup> Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 216.

<sup>4</sup> See Muir, *Annals of the Early Caliphate*, p. 273.

<sup>5</sup> See Margoliouth, *Mohammedanism*, p. 129.

Muḥammadan power, perhaps, more common than it is now. History relates that Baber used to enjoy astounding drinking bouts, and confessed to being four times drunk in twenty-four hours. Jehángír's love for the bottle is recorded on the gold coins he had struck. On these he is represented sitting cross-legged on his throne, goblet in hand, which shows the contempt he had for two important prohibitions of his religion—the taking of wine and the engraving of pictures of the human figure. Several princes of the Mughal families died a drunkard's death.

As for 'Umar Khayyám, whose cult is very much in evidence to-day, he was a veritable toper. He says:—

Bring physic to this heart with sorrow drear,  
 Bring wine, musk-scented, rosy-tinted, clear,  
 Dost thou not know of Sorrow's antidote?  
 Wine to thy lips, and Music to thine ear.

He hoped for it even in death:—

When Death shall tread me down and pluck me bare  
 Of this brave plumage which through life I wear,  
 Then mould me to a cup and fill with wine:—  
 Its bouquet will revive me then and there.

III. *Laws concerning Arts and Recreation.*—Music, painting, sculpture, and gaming were all condemned by the Prophet. He considered that these things led men into gaiety and dissipation and vice. A bell or a flute was to him the devil's instrument. But Muḥammadans cannot very well annihilate natural instincts, and many in all lands show a decided partiality for music and singing. In Egypt, Lane says, the people are excessively fond of music and the darwishes use it in religious ceremonies. In Bengal, the lower class Muḥammadans think nothing of singing the Hindu songs in praise of the amorous

doings of the god Krishna, though this is strongly condemned by the better classes.

Games of chance are also prohibited. 'Only would Satan sow hatred and strife among you, by wine and games of chance, and turn you aside from the remembrance of God, and from prayer: will ye not, therefore, abstain from them.'<sup>1</sup> The evidence of a known gambler is not allowed in a Muḥammadan court of law. The taking of interest is also forbidden by the Qur'án.

IV. *Laws, Criminal and Civil.*—The briefest acquaintance with the criminal laws of Islám on the part of a Christian is sufficient to make him grateful that the vast majority of the Muḥammadans of the world to-day are checked and corrected by the laws of Christian nations and not by the enactments laid down by the Prophet of Islám.

(1) Theft.—'As to the thief, whether man or woman, cut ye off their hands in recompense for their doings.'<sup>2</sup> The expounders of the law taught that for the first offence the right hand should be cut off, for the second offence the left foot, for the third the left hand, for the fourth the right foot. If the person persisted in stealing after that, he should be beaten. Now the monstrous injustice of such severe punishment is in this; the man would be so maimed as to be quite unable to earn his living.

(2) Plunder.—While theft is severely dealt with, plunder has received divine sanction. 'They will question thee about the spoils. Say: the spoils are God's and the Apostle's. Therefore, fear God, and settle this

<sup>1</sup> Súrata'l-Má'ida (v) 93.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. (v) 42.

among yourselves.' 'When ye have taken any booty, a fifth part belongeth to God and to the Apostle, and to the near of kin, and to orphans, and to the poor, and to the wayfarer, if ye believe in God.'<sup>1</sup> These texts refer particularly to the spoils taken at the battle of Badr, but now they have universal application.

(3) Murder.—The *Qur'án* ordains that murder shall be punished with death. 'O Believers! retaliation for blood-shedding is prescribed to you: the free man for the free, and the slave for the slave, and the woman for the woman, but he to whom his brother (i.e. fellow-believer) shall make any remission (i.e. of the death penalty), is to be dealt with equitably; and to him should he pay a fine with liberality.'<sup>2</sup> The fine was usually one hundred camels—not a very difficult matter for wealthy men to pay. It will be seen then that this law of retaliation strikes at the equality of man and indirectly allows oppression of those less fortunate. According to traditional practice, this law does not apply when a Muslim, be he free or slave, kills a non-Muslim. To illustrate this we may refer to a recent event. In Egypt, when a Muslim is condemned to death by the Government law courts, it is the custom to send the sentence from the court to the Mufti, or official exponent of Muḥammadan law, for confirmation. When last year a distinguished Coptic Christian was shot by a Muḥammadan, the verdict of the court in which no European sat, was most pronounced that the death penalty should be passed upon the accused. But the Mufti solemnly put it on record that his sanction of the death sentence

<sup>1</sup> *Súratu'l-Anfál* (viii) 1, 42.

<sup>2</sup> *Súratu'l-Baqara* (ii) 173.



was impossible, because a revolver was used for inflicting injury, whereas Muḥammad directed that such punishment should be given only when death was caused by a sharp weapon. Further, 'Judgment must be delivered in conformity with the Sharí'a (i.e. the religious laws for guidance of Muslims for the duties of life), fulfilling all the conditions of validity required by the Sharí'a, in an action of law, valid according to the rules of the Sharí'a, brought by one party against another party recognized as such by the Sharí'a.' By this we are to understand that the murder of a non-Muslim by a Muslim is not, in the opinion of the interpreter of the law, punishable by death. It should be stated that his objections did not hinder the authorities in carrying out the death sentence.

(4) Adultery.—The punishment attached to this sin is very severe. Muḥammad said: 'If any of your women be guilty of whoredom, then bring four witnesses against them from among yourselves; and if they bear witness to the fact, shut them up within their houses till death release them, or God make some way for them.'<sup>1</sup> Why were four witnesses necessary? The necessity for four witnesses appears to have been demanded, because of a scandal that happened in connexion with Muḥammad's own girl-wife 'Áyisha. In a night march she was accidentally left behind, and in the morning was brought into camp by a stranger. Her enemies began to besmirch her character and even her husband had doubts concerning her, but a convenient revelation came clearing her from all blame, and the command was issued that in all such

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'n-Nisá (iv) 19.

cases four witnesses must be produced, or the informant be punished with fourscore stripes.<sup>1</sup>

(5) Apostacy.—To forsake Islám is a capital offence. A Muslim who forsakes his Faith and embraces another is to be brought before the authorities who call upon him to return to Islám. The law is that he must be imprisoned for three days, and if in that time he refuses to recant he is to be killed. A woman must be kept in confinement, some say until she dies. But in some places they have made women apostates pay the penalty with their lives at once. When Lane was in Egypt he saw a woman paraded through the streets of Cairo and afterwards taken out into the middle of the river, strangled and then thrown into the stream, for having apostatized from the faith of Muḥammad, and having married a Christian.<sup>2</sup>

The severest measures are also used against men who, while not forsaking the Faith, have taught heretical doctrines concerning Islám. Halláj, an Arabized Persian, who had a great deal to do with spreading Šúfiistic ideas, was crucified because he taught a pantheistic conception of God. Likewise the Báb, founder of the Bábís, and one of his famous women-followers, Qurratu'l-'Ayn, were executed in Persia, because their teaching was not in accord with orthodoxy. In Afghánistan, within recent years, Mullás of learning and distinction have been stoned to death because the Ecclesiastical Court con-

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Sell, *The Life of Muhammad*, pp. 157-9.

<sup>2</sup> Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (Everyman's Library). See also *Sweetfruits*, an Arabic story obtainable in English, Urdu and Musalmáni-Bengali, which describes the severe measures used against apostacy.

sidered that their teaching was contrary to the orthodox view.

Perhaps we should make it clear that all these laws are not in force in lands ruled by Christian nations. Muslim subjects have been met as far as possible, and in India, Egypt and in the Dutch and German colonies, certain suitable parts of the laws of marriage and inheritance are recognized and used ; but all that part of the law of Islám upholding slavery, the lopping of a man's limbs for theft, and the killing of the perverts has been abolished.

Syed Amír 'Alí is never tired of asserting that the superiority of Islám over Christianity is to be found in its 'common-sense prescriptions' of religious duty addressed to mankind 'in a positive form and formulated with the precision of enactments surrounded with definite sanctions.'<sup>1</sup> He considers that Christianity has failed, because it preaches principles and not positive rules for cleanliness, prayer and fasting, and against drunkenness and other evils. But in what he considers to be the failure of our Faith, we see its striking power and victory, for whereas the principles of Christianity are of universal application, the prescriptions of Islám are largely local and restricted. The principles laid down by our Lord Jesus Christ may become the basis of the social order of any community all the world over ; but the stereotyped laws of Islám, owing to the nature of the people or certain conditions of country, may be absolutely useless. For example, at the time of the fast of Ramaḍán, there is a rule in regard to eating at night

<sup>1</sup> Syed Amír 'Alí, *The Spirit of Islám*, p. 159.

as follows : ' Eat and drink until ye can discern a white thread from a black thread by the day-break, then fast strictly till night.'<sup>1</sup> Now a rule like this could be kept only with disastrous effect upon the observer in the northern latitudes where the sun does not set for months at a time. Other laws are just as local in their application. True the civil and criminal laws have sections dealing with property, but it can be rarely interpreted to mean anything but movable property—that most commonly known to the plundering Arabs. Hence in Bengal where there are so many land disputes the Muslim law is totally inadequate, and all land cases have to be tried in accordance with British law.

Our Lord Jesus Christ never laid stress upon mechanical rules, for He knew that they might easily be followed with the heart unmoved. There was much in the law of Moses that He quoted with approval, and gave to it the fullest meaning, but his great concern was with the personality of man. He was concerned with the desire and thought behind the act. Out of the heart are the issues of life. Hate preceded murder. Lust was not only in the act but in the eye. Therefore He maintained the need for a change of heart and purity of motive. Let the man be renewed and he will stand in right relations with God and his fellow-men, and act towards both under a new law of love. Then there will be practically no possibility of his going wrong if he follow the Ideal. Professor Seeley says : ' The law which Christ gave was not only illustrated, but infinitely enlarged by his deeds. For every deed was itself

<sup>1</sup> *Súratu'l-Baqara* (ii) 183.

a precedent to be followed, and therefore to discuss the legislation of Christ is to discuss His character ; for it may be justly said the Christ himself is the Christian law.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Seeley, *Ecce Homo*, p. 88 (Everyman's Library).

## CHAPTER VII

### THE BOOK OF ISLÁM

THEORETICALLY the first authority in the religion of Islám is the Qur'án, but in practice the interpreters of that book are regarded as the first authorities by Muḥammadans to-day. The word Qur'án means 'the Reading', or 'that which ought to be read.' The book has other names, and we are told that as many as fifty-five distinct titles may be found in the text of the book itself, including Kitábu'lláh—the book of God, and Muṣḥaf-i-Majíd—the Glorious Volume; but the two names most in use in India are Qur'án-i-Sharíf—the noble Qur'án, and al-Furqán—the discrimination, or that which distinguishes truth from falsehood.

I. *Its Collection, Composition and Collation.*—At the time of Muḥammad's death, the Qur'án was in an inchoate state. As the Prophet had ejaculated his sayings, there were friends and followers who had been ready to take them down in writing or commit them to memory. It appears that these men in public and private used to rehearse all that they had heard from the lips of their teacher, adding his posture and gesture to emphasize the authenticity of the speech. Nothing could have been more congenial to an eloquent people like the Arabs, than the recital of such rhythmic lines as

those passed on to them, and we can imagine a rivalry springing up amongst the reciters unknown even in the palmiest days of the Arabian eisteddfod of 'Ukaz. But battles in all directions were diminishing their number. Bukhárí tells of seventy persons killed in one battle alone, that of Yamana, who knew the whole of the Qur'án by heart. This was a serious matter and 'Umar was one of the first to see that if war continued they might lose the principal records of their Prophet's revelations. Going to the Khalífa Abú Bakr, he said: 'I fear that slaughter may again wax hot among the reciters of the Qur'án in other fields of battle and that much may be lost therefrom. Now, therefore, my advice is that thou shouldest give speedy orders for collecting the same together.' Abú Bakr saw the reasonableness of this advice and appointed Zaid ibn Thábit, a Madína man of some culture, who had been one of the Prophet's amanuenses, to gather up the sayings from every quarter and compile them.

Zaid strongly objected to the proposal at first, regarding it as a slight upon the Prophet. It suggested the thought that he had left his work incomplete. But his objection was overcome and in the year A. D. 633, he set himself to the task, and a most difficult one it was. This is what Zaid himself said: 'I sought the Qur'án, and collected it from the leaves of the date, and white stones, and the breasts of people who remembered it, till I found the last part of the chapter entitled Tauba (Repentance) with Abú Khuzaimahu'l-Anṣarí, and with no other person.' Zaid was not concerned about the correct order of the revelations, or the continuity of thought; his concern was to save, anyhow, the precious

utterances of his master, hence the collection was written down in a haphazard manner.

This first version became virtually the Khalífa's copy, though it would appear that parts of it, if not the whole, were copied and carried to distant places. When Abú Bakr died and 'Umar succeeded him, the book was handed over to 'Umar's daughter, Hafaṣa, one of the Prophet's widows, for safe keeping. With the rise of 'Uthmán the third Khalífa, it was found that there was great dissatisfaction at the number of renderings or readings of the different revelations. The pronunciation and punctuation were different. One swore he had heard the Prophet give his message in one way, while others were quite as emphatic that he had said it in the way they recited it. This led 'Uthmán to command that a recension be made, and a revision committee consisting of three educated Quraish residents of Mecca was set up to assist Zaid in the work. It was determined to call in all the various versions in the different dialects, and all the doubtful readings, and compare them, and after considering the reliability of the reciters or possessors of revelations, settle the text. Muir says: 'In case of differences between Zaid and his coadjutors, the voice of the latter, as conclusive of the Quraishite idiom, was to preponderate; and the new collation was thus assimilated to the Meccan dialect, in which the Prophet had given utterance to his inspiration. Transcripts were multiplied and forwarded to the chief cities in the empire, and the previously existing copies were all, by the Khalífa's command, committed to the flames. The old original was returned to Hafaṣa's custody. This, too, was destroyed after her death. 'The recension of



'Uthmán has been handed down to us unaltered. So carefully, indeed, has it been preserved, that there are no variations of importance, we might almost say no variations at all, amongst the innumerable copies of the Qur'án scattered throughout the vast bounds of the empire of Islám.'<sup>1</sup> We see then that within thirty years of the death of Muḥammad, the text of the Qur'án was fixed and sent forth to do its work. It is almost certain that the first copies were written on leather, dyed a reddish-brown colour. That it was not parchment the Arabs used at that time, but real leather, is proved from the fact that a messenger, sent by the Prophet himself with a letter, put the missive to practical use by patching his leathern pail with it. These leather documents could be rolled up, tied and sealed, which ensured secrecy and safety.

II. *Its Arrangement and Division.*—To understand the Qur'án is to understand the mind of Muḥammad, but that is impossible if we follow the order of chapters as given in the Arabic version and followed by Sale in his English translation. Zaid adopted the plan of placing the longest chapters first and the shortest last, which makes sequence of thought and circumstances impossible, for the shortest are now known to have been uttered very early in Muḥammad's career.

(1) *Chronological Arrangement.*—The text thus arranged: 'assumes the form of a most unreadable and incongruous patchwork.' To give an instance of the confusion, the ninety-sixth chapter should be placed

<sup>1</sup> Muir, *Life of Mahomet* (one volume edition), p. 557; see also *The Rescensions of the Qur'án* (C.L.S.).

first, and that which appears second in the original should be the ninety-first. Thanks to German criticism the supposed revelations have been arranged in chronological order and the results of work by Orientalists like Weil and Nöldeke are now admitted to be certain. Rodwell in his English translation has followed the order adopted by these scholars.

While some have systematized the supposed revelations, others have divided the book into periods. Stanley Lane-Poole has made a four-fold division, namely:—

- |                       |   |                                               |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------------------------|
| Speeches<br>at Mecca  | { | 1. The Poetic Period, A.D. 609 to 613.        |
|                       |   | 2. The Rhetorical Period, A.D. 613 to 615.    |
|                       |   | 3. The Argumentative Period, A.D. 615 to 622. |
| Speeches<br>at Madína | { | 4. The Argumentative Period, A.D. 622 to 632. |

Or the Mecca and Madína periods may be roughly divided into periods of the Prophet's personal and political religion, for while the early portion of the book 'is one long blazonry of nature's beauty' displayed in praise of the one Lord of Creation, the latter portion is taken up with the petty decisions of a statesman and lawgiver.

(2) Textual Divisions.—The Qur'án is divided up into many sections and sub-sections, and there is good reason to believe that Muḥammad knew many of the chapters, and gave not a few of them their names as they now appear. The book has 114 Súras, or chapters, each possessing some definite title or titles, taken from some outstanding word or subject to be found in the chapter concerned. For instance, the second Súra is entitled al-Baqara—'The Cow'; it deals largely with the subject of women, but we should not associate this subject with the

title as some have been inclined to do. The title was occasioned by the story of the red heifer referred to in verses 64-7.

Here are a few of the names of chapters—Unity, The Ant, The Spider, Pilgrimage, News, Abú Lahab, Spoils, Women, Divorce, The Pen, The Elephant, Mary, Poets and Resurrection. These titles remind us of nothing so much as the catchy headings of the occasional article in a monthly magazine.<sup>1</sup> In the opinion of some, the chapters are of the nature of the leading articles of a newspaper, and 'their objects, frequently, were exactly those of such leading articles or editorials in the organ of a party.'

Like the Jews, the Muḥammadans are careful to keep count of the number of words and letters in their sacred book. The words number 77,639, and the letters 323,015. Then the book has verses like our present Bible. They are called Áyáts, but are not divided up by all Muslims in the same way. Indian Muslims say there are 6,239. There are other divisions, particularly the Sípára. The Qur'án is divided into thirty Sípáras or parts. It was divided thus for the benefit of readers in royal houses and mausoleums, thirty men being engaged to read or recite their part every day, thus ensuring the reading of the whole Qur'án.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Charles Lamb's headings are a good specimen of what we mean. Here are a few : Unitarian Protests, The Ass, The Months, Newspapers. My Relations, On the ambiguities arising from Proper Names, A Vision of Horns, Grace before meat.

<sup>2</sup> For a full account of these divisions, see *The Faith of Islám* (3rd ed.), pp. 70-83 and for the special spelling of words and the art of reading the Qur'án, see appendix, 'Ilmu't-Tajwid in the *Faith of Islám*.

III. *Its Inspiration*.—Muḥammad was prepared to swear by the stars that the Qur'án was inspired :—

It needs not that I swear by the setting of the stars,  
And it is a great oath, if ye knew it,  
That this is the honourable Qur'án,  
Written in the preserved Book :  
Let none touch it but the purified,  
It is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds.<sup>1</sup>

It cannot be expected that a Muslim and a non-Muslim will approach the consideration of the Qur'án in the same way. The latter will open its pages, possibly with a firm determination to be just to Muḥammad, and probably he will be more just to him than a Muslim could be, because he will use his critical faculties, comparing statements of the book with history and with facts recorded in other books and with other religions, which, according to its pages, were also ordained of God. But a Muslim would never think of examining his book thus. A Maulaví said to the writer the other day : 'One of the first duties of a Musalmán is to believe in the Qur'án blindly. It is the Book of God, therefore, we must accept its every word as being true without a doubt. To attempt to criticize any part of it would be sin.' With illiterate Muslims the Qur'án has become as much a fetish as the Black Stone of Mecca. No one dare touch it with unwashed hands. Some place a label on its cover as a warning never to do so. In many Muḥammadan 'shops in Bengal, the shopkeepers will never sell a copy of the Qur'án to a European, because it would necessitate placing it in the unclean hands of an unbeliever. It is a talisman ; men wear verses from it

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-Wáqi'a (lvi) 74-9.



<p>ع ۛۛۛۛۛ</p>	<p>छूना एथलाह मकान ना- बेगन हय। इहाते 8 आः</p>	<p>بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ          شروع سائھے نام اللہ کے بخشش کرنے والا مہربان</p>	<p>سورة الاخلاص مكية رضى الزرع آیات</p>
		<p>قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۝          کہہ و ۛ اللہ ایک ہے ۛ اللہ نے احتیاج ہے ۛ ۛ نہین جنا اوسنے اور نہ          تۇمی بول سےی آمانا اک مانا ۛ ۛ آمانا بهاجت (نیکان) ۛ تاہا ۛہتے کہہ کرمانہا ۛ          اےۛ تانی</p>	
		<p>يُولَدُ ۝ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهٗ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ۝          جذگیا اور نہین ہے واسطے اوسکے برابر کونہی کوئی (۲)          کاہا ۛہتے کرمانہا ۛ ۛ ۛ تاہا تۇنا کہہی نہا ۛ</p>	

in lockets on different parts of the body, for it is said to charm away disease and devils. It has a magical influence, and some believe that if thrown into the fire it will never burn.

The orthodox view is that the Qur'án is eternal and uncreated.—‘It is not God, but still it is inseparable from God.’ This question of whether the Qur'án was eternal or not, and whether created or uncreated, has given rise to many fierce debates and wars and sects in Islám.<sup>1</sup>

(1) The coming of the book to this earth—we might almost say the incarnation of it, when it is said to be ‘inseparable from God’, was on this wise. Muḥammadans say that the prototype of the Qur'án, or ‘Mother of the Book’<sup>2</sup> as Muḥammad calls it, is in heaven, written down from everlasting on the ‘well-guarded tablet,’ near the Throne of God, side by side with the divine decrees. A copy of this eternal record was sent down to the lowest of the seven heavens only, from which Muḥammad received it as the text says: ‘in parcels have we parcelled out to thee,’<sup>3</sup> as occasion required through the medium of the angel Gabriel. The Prophet claimed to have seen the whole book, inscribed on silk, on several occasions. It will be understood, then, that it was wholly an objective revelation. Ibn Khaldún, the great historian of Muḥammadanism, says: ‘Of all the divine books the Qur'án is only one of which the text, words and phrases have been communicated to a prophet by an audible voice. It is otherwise with the Pentateuch, the Gospel and the other

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Sell, *The Faith of Islám* (3rd ed.), pp. 199-201.

<sup>2</sup> Súratu'z-Zukhruf (xliii) 3.

<sup>3</sup> Súratu'l-Furqán (xxv) 34.

divine books: the prophets received them under the form of ideas.'<sup>1</sup>

(2) It is in this verbal inspiration that the Muslim sees proof of the superhuman and miraculous. The Qur'án is a perfect miracle. Muḥammad had already said this: 'Verily were men and jinn assembled to produce the like of this Qur'án, they could not produce its like, though the one should help the other.'<sup>2</sup> But here, we believe, Muḥammad meant the doctrines of the divine unity and the resurrection and other ideas, not the language of the book, for in another place it is implied that language is only a secondary consideration. We read, 'An Arabic Qur'án have we sent it down, that ye might understand it.'<sup>3</sup> But Muslims contend that everything about the book is miraculous. Its language is God's language; its eloquence and diction are unsurpassable; its theological ideas and moral precepts and principles of civil and criminal law are all a part of the miracle. They argue that prophets have performed miracles in that department of skill or science which flourished in their age, thus Moses was skilled in magic, Jesus in the healing art, but Muḥammad excelled in producing a book unrivalled in eloquence and beauty of diction. The miracles of the former prophets were of a temporary character, but the Qur'án, the miracle of Muḥammad, is permanent, 'the standing miracle.'

IV. *Style, Language and Teaching*.—Most authorities agree with Sale that 'the style of the Qur'án is generally

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Sell's, *The Faith of Islám* (3rd ed.), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Súratu Bani Isrá'íl (xvii) 90.

<sup>3</sup> Súratu Yúsuf (xii) 2.



beautiful and fluent, especially where it imitates the prophetic manner, and Scripture phrases. In many places, especially where the majesty and attributes of God are described, it is sublime and magnificent.’<sup>1</sup> That its style is unapproachable is unproven. Nöldeke says: ‘Muḥammad was not in any sense, a master of style.’ In Muḥammad’s time ‘One man, an-Naḍír ibn Ḥáritha, accepted the challenge to produce anything as good, and either versified or put into rhyme the tales of the Persian kings which Firdausi some four centuries later rendered immortal—or perhaps those of the kings of Ḥirá. These Súras he read out at seances similar to those in which the Prophet published the Qur’án. The effect of this criticism must have been very damaging; for, when the Prophet at the battle of Badr got the man into his power, he executed him at once, while he allowed the other prisoners to be ransomed.’<sup>2</sup> No Muslim now will attempt to write anything like the Qur’án. Palmer says: ‘That the best of Arab writers has never succeeded in producing anything equal in merit to the Qur’án itself is not surprising. In the first place, they have agreed beforehand that it is unapproachable, and they have adopted its style as the perfect standard; any deviation from it therefore must of necessity be a defect. Again with them this style is not spontaneous as with Muḥammad and his contemporaries, but is as artificial as though Englishmen should still continue to follow Chaucer as their model, in spite of the changes which their language has undergone. With the

<sup>1</sup> Sale, *The Koran: Preliminary Discourse*, Sec. iii.

<sup>2</sup> Margoliouth, *Mohammed*, p. 135.

Prophet the style was natural, and the words were those used in everyday ordinary life, while with the later Arabic authors the style is imitative and the ancient words are introduced as a literary embellishment. The natural consequence is that their attempts 'look laboured and unreal by the side of his impromptu and forcible eloquence.'

As regards its teaching, Gibbon was to the point when he said that the people of Arabia were so ignorant that they were 'incapable of comparing the productions of human genius.'<sup>1</sup> Every nation holds up some book as a standard of style of language, but because the Qur'án has been the standard of style in Arabic since Muḥammad's day it does not follow that the book is inspired, or the best book in the world. Milton has written in a fine English style, but he has more than style; he has given us a wealth of ideas. Can the same be said of the Qur'án? It is not necessary to have a thorough knowledge of the original to find out this. Though it may not be possible, as the Muḥammadans say, to give to a translation the beauty of the original, yet the ideas which Muḥammad intended to convey in his book, may be understood in a translation, and we judge by these as to its value to mankind.

While Muḥammad tells fables and stories to teach a truth or support an argument, he gives no moral teaching, or principles that compare favourably with the teaching of the Old Testament Prophets and New Testament Apostles; in fact the best stories told are distorted renderings of Bible incidents. Further, the book is wanting in

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Hughes, in *The Dictionary of Islám*, p. 524.

that pathetic and sympathetic touch so marked in the narratives of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Qur'án has nothing like the sympathy of the Saviour as depicted in the story of the widow of Nain, or in that of the home of Bethany, or in that of the blessing of the children; and there is no teaching so sublime as the sermon on the mount, or Paul's great epic on love. We do find, however, whole passages dealing with the Prophet's domestic affairs which can be of no benefit to mankind, except to show the truly human origin of the book, for they are given in the Qur'án, not as moral lessons, but as revelations to clear the Prophet or his wives from blame.

There are certain points that always strike us when reading the Qur'án.

It lacks originality, which surely is a great weakness. Originality is a test of the value of systems of thought or religion. There is undoubted cleverness in the manner old ideas are presented in a new garb, but original thought there is none.

It is circumscribed. It represents the mind of a single person and a single type of society, namely, the Arabian. As Dean Stanley says: 'The Qur'án (with a very few exceptions) notices no phenomena except those of the desert, no form of society except Arabian life.'<sup>1</sup>

It is unscientific. Romanes, a noted English scientist, who for many years lost faith in Christianity, said upon his return to the Church: 'One of the strongest pieces of objective evidence in favour of Christianity . . . is the absence from the biography of Christ

<sup>1</sup> Stanley, *The Eastern Church*, p. 264 (Everyman's Library).

of any doctrines which the subsequent growth of human knowledge—whether in natural science, ethics, political economy, or elsewhere—has had to discount.’<sup>1</sup> Many of the ideas of Manu, Socrates and Plato have become obsolete, and what shall we say of the teaching of the Qur’án that mountains were thrown upon the earth to keep it steady<sup>2</sup>; that the sun sets in a spring of black mud<sup>3</sup>; that shooting stars are flames darted at devils to prevent them listening by stealth to what is said in heaven.<sup>4</sup>

It is contradictory. This is the very thing that Muḥammad said it was not. Here are his words: ‘Can they not consider the Qur’án? Were it from any other than God, they would surely have found in it many contradictions.’<sup>5</sup> But in spite of his claim, the book is contradictory. The Prophet got over this by inventing a theory of abrogation (*mansúkh*), which is supposed to have received divine sanction, for Alláh is made to say, ‘Whatever verses we cancel, or cause thee to forget, we bring a better or its like. Knowest thou not that God hath power over all things.’<sup>6</sup> ‘What He pleaseth will God abrogate or confirm.’<sup>7</sup>

Probably Muḥammad thought this theory quite in keeping with what had happened before. Prophets had appeared with teaching which differed from that which had been given by other prophets. While it is true that Christ did not come ‘to destroy but to fulfil,’ the very process of ‘filling up full’ made a distinct change;

<sup>1</sup> Romanes, *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> Súratu’n-Nahl (xvi) 15.

<sup>3</sup> Súratu’l-Kahf (xviii) 84.

<sup>4</sup> Súratu’s-Şáffát (xxxvii) 6-9.

<sup>5</sup> Súratu’n-Nisá’ (iv) 84.

<sup>6</sup> Súratu’l-Baqara (ii) 100.

<sup>7</sup> Súratu’r-Ra’d (xiii) 39.

the legal conception of righteousness could no longer stand before the nobler spiritual conception of the Saviour. And we can understand a change like this, but it is very difficult to understand the need for change or abrogation, when the text of the whole book is supposed to have been written from all eternity upon a tablet in heaven. Why in a few short years of the Prophet's life should alterations be necessary? Were they made also in the original copy? If mistakes had been made, who made them—God, Gabriel or Muḥammad? The more one knows of Muḥammad and his circumstances, the more clear it is that this system of abrogating revelations was a law of expediency made to enable him to get out of tight places.

Muslims say that there are 225 verses cancelled by later ones. Here are specimens.

*Abrogated Verses.*

(Mansúkh)

*Abrogating Verses.*

(Násikh)

1. The Qibla:—

The East and the West is God's: therefore, whichever way ye turn, there is the face of God.<sup>1</sup>

From whatever place thou comest forth, turn thy face toward the sacred Mosque; and wherever ye be to that part turn your faces.<sup>2</sup>

2. War in the sacred month:—

They will ask thee concerning war in the Sacred Month. Say: to war therein is bad.<sup>3</sup>

Of these (months) four are sacred . . . attack those who join gods with God in all.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 109.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 214.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 145.

<sup>4</sup> Súratu't-Tauba (ix) 36.

## 3. War in the sacred mosque :—

Kill them wherever ye shall find them . . . at- tack them not at the sacred Mosque. <sup>1</sup>	Kill those who join other gods with God wherever ye shall find them. <sup>2</sup>
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## 4. Muḥammad's wives :—

It is not permitted thee to take other wives hereafter. <sup>3</sup>	We allow thee thy wives whom thou hast dower- ed . . . and any believ- ing woman who hath given herself up to the Prophet, if the Prophet desired to wed her—a privilege for thee above the rest of the faithful. <sup>4</sup>
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The contradictions in the Qur'án to the Christian Scriptures are very many, and for this reason most Muslims apply the theory of abrogation to the Bible, but this is quite opposed to the teaching of the Qur'án where it is distinctly stated that it was sent to 'confirm' and 'guard' the former books.<sup>5</sup> And there is not a single verse in the Qur'án that says the Bible has been abrogated, and we have it on good authority that 'not a single tradition of this nature is found in *Ṣiḥāḥu's-Sitta*, which contains six books of six great Imáms and Traditionists.'<sup>6</sup>

Now that we have dealt with the Qur'án, it will be in place to say something here of the other organs of ecclesiastical authority, as they are closely connected with the sacred book of Islám. They are :—

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 187.<sup>2</sup> Súratu'l-Tauba (ix) 5.<sup>3</sup> Súratu'l-Aḥzáb (xxxiii) 52.<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 49.<sup>5</sup> Sell, *The Historical Development of the Qur'án* (S.P.C.K., 3rd ed.), p. 116.<sup>6</sup> Rev. Aḥmad Sháh of Hamirpur, India.

Aḥadīth (sing. Ḥadīth) and Sunna or traditions of what Muḥammad (i) did, (ii) enjoined, and (iii) allowed.

Ijmá', or the unanimous consent of the learned doctors or fathers of Islám.

Qiyás, or the analogical reasoning of the learned in regard to the Qur'án, Ḥadīth and Ijmá'.

(1) The Traditions.—The traditions of Islám are called Ḥadīth meaning 'a saying,' and Sunna 'a custom.' They are all commonly classed under the term Ḥadīth. The Qur'án is regarded as the word of God, but the Ḥadīth contains the records of the sayings and doings of the Prophet, said and done as Muslims believe, under a special divine guidance.

What is the origin of these traditions? The Qur'án was supposed to be perfect, but difficulties arose in regard to minor details. So long as the Prophet was with them he could be appealed to, and that was the end of the difficulty. What better plan could be adopted then, than to collect the decisions made by the Prophet at different times. There were hundreds living who knew their teacher intimately, had heard his 'table-talk,' and seen much of his practice. Of these many passed on a great deal, 'Áyisha, the Prophet's widow, being a most fruitful source of tradition. Thousands of incidents were told, many of which were spurious, invented either to glorify the Prophet, or to fit in with the schemes of certain individuals or parties. It was, therefore, found necessary to establish the authenticity of the traditions by a chain of authorities.

We give a specimen of a tradition and the method of transmitting it: 'Abú Kuraib said to us that Ibráhím ibn Yúsuf ibn Isháq said to us, from his father, from Abú

Ishāq, from Tulata ibn Musarif, that he said, I have heard from 'Abdu'r-Raḥmān ibn Ausajat that he said, I have heard from Bara ibn Azib that he said, I have heard that the Prophet said whoever shall give in charity a milch cow, or a piece of silver, or a leathern bottle of water, it shall be equal to the freeing of a slave.'<sup>1</sup> From this it will be seen that much depended upon the reliability of those transmitting the tradition.

The traditions increased; 'the material began to grow like an avalanche,' and it was found necessary to examine and arrange all in order. This was a colossal task as the traditions had run into millions. To-day there are 1,465 collections of them in existence, but only six have achieved canonical authority, namely, those of Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Abú Dá'ūd, Nasá'ī and Ibn Maja. In India, Muslims of the Sunnī persuasion hold these six collections in the highest honour, and perhaps would agree with a well-known Muslim statement that 'the collection of Bukhārī is the most excellent book of Islām after the Book of God.' The Sunnīs also use another collection, the *Mishkātu'l-Maṣābiḥ*, a selection from all the authorities, made by Baghāwī, a renowned commentator. The Shí'ah Muḥammadans reject all these books and put five others in their place.

We have before referred to the way the Muḥammadan is bound by laws and ceremonies. These traditions have added to his fetters. What if his eating, drinking, sleeping or bathing are out of order! This is his dread. It is said of the learned Imām Ḥanbal that he would do nothing without clear direction from the Qur'án or

<sup>1</sup> Hughes, *The Dictionary of Islām*, p. 640.



Sunna, and on one occasion he would not eat water-melons, because, although he knew the Prophet ate them, he could not learn whether he ate them with or without the rind, or whether he broke, bit or cut them.

(2) *Ijmá'*.—This is the consensus of opinion of learned doctors or Muslim divines. The system dates back to the Prophet. It is related that, when Muḥammad selected Mu'ádh ibn Jabal as Governor of Yemen, and was about to despatch him thither, he said to him, 'After what manner will you judge?' He replied, 'By the Qur'án.' 'And should you find nothing there?' 'After the rules of the Prophet of God.' 'And should you find nothing there?' 'Then by deduction after the best of my judgement.' Upon hearing this the Prophet is said to have exclaimed, 'God be praised, who have given to his Prophet a messenger with whom he is well pleased.' It is in the established opinions and 'analogical judgements' of men like this—Companions of the Prophet and their followers—that we find the basis of *Ijmá'*.

Pre-eminent among those who are famous for their judgements are four Imáms who founded four theological schools of the Sunní order. They are Abú Ḥanífa an-Nu'mán (A. D. 700), whose theology, founded largely on reason and philosophy, is prevalent in India and Turkey and Central Asia. Málik ibn Anas (A. D. 798), who clung to tradition and particularly 'the customs of Madína.' His system is followed in Madína, Upper Egypt and North Africa. As Sháfi'í (A. D. 768), who dealt with the 'formulation of rules, to some extent grammatical, for the interpretation of Qur'anic precepts.' His system is prevalent in Lower Egypt, Syria, the Bombay Presidency and South India. Aḥmad ibn

Ḥanbal (A. D. 780). Only the Wahhábís of Central Arabia are Ḥanbalís.

These four schools have each an oratory in Mecca, on the four sides of the Ka'ba, where Mulánas of the different schools lead their followers in prayer and explain their respective differences. These differences appear very paltry to an outsider. They deal with the extent of the arm to be washed before prayer, and whether a person must be of age and of sound mind or not when he gives the legal alms. Ḥanífa and Málik agree that the borrower of an article may lend it to some other person without the owner's permission, but Sháfi'í maintains that the owner's permission is necessary.

(3) Qiyás.—This literally means reasoning or comparing. Every law not provided by the Prophet and his Companions must be deducted analogically.

From what has been said it will be seen that Islám, instead of being the simple faith which so many boast, is one of the most complicated religious systems the world has ever known, and every Muslim must cast from him all liberty of thought and freedom of will, and sink himself in the cumbrous system of blindly accepting all the ritual and interpretations of all the authorities who have made Islám what it is to-day.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On these foundations of Muslim dogma and law, see *The Faith of Islám* (3rd ed.), chapter i and note on Ijtihád; and 'Abdu'r-Raḥmán's *Muḥammadan Jurisprudence*. (S.P.C.K. Dépôt, Madras.)

This latter book is a very valuable compilation of Muslim law.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SECTS OF ISLÁM

THERE are a great many people who think with Spinoza that Muḥammadanism is to be preferred above many systems of religion because of its freedom from divisions. But that is a profound error, Islám having been divided up from almost the day of the death of the Prophet. 'Heresy after heresy,' says Dr. Speer, 'has shot schism upon schism through what we used to look upon as a solid mass of Muḥammadanism.'

Muḥammad himself anticipated a split among his followers, for he said: 'The Magíans are sub-divided into seventy sects, the Jews into seventy-one, the Christians into seventy-two, and in my religion there will be seventy-three, all of which, except one (that is the one which followed him faithfully), will enter the fire and perish.' Because of this prophecy of Muḥammad's, Muslims try to make the number of sects to tally with his, though in reality there are very many more. Shaikh 'Abdu'l-Kádir says there are no less than one hundred and fifty sects in Islám.<sup>1</sup>

These sects may be classed under three broad divisions, namely, political, pietistic and puritanical, though the splits were caused through a variety of doctrines, heresies and philosophies, among others being the

<sup>1</sup> Hughes, *Dictionary of Islám*, pp. 569..

eternity of the Qur'án, apostolic descent, God the author of good and evil, free-will—some denying it to man, others admitting its existence—the divinity of the Imáms and transmigration of souls.

I. *Political*.—Generally speaking the Muslim world is divided into two fairly defined sections of Muḥammadans, namely, Sunnís and Shí'ah, the first being by far the larger and more influential.

(1) The Sunnís are the orthodox section. As the name imports they are strict adherents of faith in the Sunna or Tradition; but they differ from the Shí'ahs in points other than belief in tradition; they make the position of the Khalífa a matter for election or choice, the people claiming the liberty to name the successor of the Prophet. They assert that Muḥammad never intended that a Khalífa should succeed him in any other way.

(2) The Shí'ahs, on the other hand, claim the hereditary right of the descendants of Muḥammad to be the only legitimate Khalífas. They say that Abú Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmán were impostors and usurpers, and only 'Alí and his line should have followed the Prophet as leaders or Imáms of the faithful. They emphasize the right of 'Alí from the fact of his nearness of relationship, he being not only the Prophet's cousin, but the husband of Fátima, the only surviving daughter of Muḥammad by Khadíja.<sup>1</sup> This one subject alone has produced among Muslims a spirit of hatred unparalleled in the history of schism. Dr. Zwemer says: 'So great is their (Shí'ah) hatred toward the earlier Caliphs that on one of their festivals three images of dough filled with honey

<sup>1</sup> See *The Cult of 'Alí* (C.L.S.) for a fuller account.

are made to represent Abú Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmán, which are then stuck with knives, and the honey is sipped as typical of the blood of the usurping Caliphs. The festival is called Ghadir, from the place in Arabia where their traditions say Muḥammad declared 'Alí his rightful successor'.<sup>1</sup>

The division was made greater and permanent by the entering in of another factor. 'Its predisposing cause lies far deeper in the impassable ethnological gulf which separates the Aryan and Semitic races.' It was a racial problem that Islám with all its spirit of fraternity could not grapple with and settle. Within ten years of Muḥammad's death, Persia came under the dominion of the Muslims, although the Persians did not yield immediately to Islám. Being Aryans they had no love for the Arabs, and when the Imámate of 'Alí and his descendants was proclaimed they saw their chance to rise and make havoc in the 'House of Islám'. Osborn says they 'invented a genealogy for the express purpose of confounding the arrogance of their conqueror. . . . Hatred of the Arab was the predominant motive which guided their actions' in joining the party of 'Alí. This jealousy and pride of race have made the Shí'ah sect to be the dominant Muslim sect in Persia. In no other place are they so strong. The few that do exist in Arabia and Turkey are largely of foreign origin. They are fairly numerous in Mesopotamia and parts of India, but in comparison with the Sunnís they number less than one-twelfth of the Muslim world.

There are other factors that helped the split. There

<sup>1</sup> Zwemer, *Islám*, p. 138.

was the jealousy of 'Áyisha. She always hated 'Alí, probably because he was married to Fátima, the daughter of Khadíja.<sup>1</sup> She could never hear Khadíja's name mentioned without feeling jealous and angry, for Muḥammad had loved her so much and prized the memory of her love and many good deeds. Then there was the jealousy of the different branches of the Quraish tribe, who, having been forced into accepting Islám, looked more to the political advantage of retaining the Khalífate in their possession, than to the spiritual leadership which should be demanded of the one holding the position.

During the Khalífate of Abú Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmán, the partisans of 'Alí were busy with agitation and intrigue. They gained ground and in A. D. 656 assassinated 'Uthmán. 'Alí then came to his own, being elected Khalífa, but 'Áyisha busied herself in the interest of the party that wished to dethrone him. She collected an army to avenge the murder of 'Uthmán and on 'the Day of the Camel'—thus called because 'Áyisha on a camel led the army herself—in A. D. 656, a battle took place at Buṣra, and she was defeated. But 'Alí's reign did not last long: he was assassinated in a mosque at Kúfa by an enemy in the year A. D. 660.

'Alí had two sons, named Ḥasan and Ḥusain, and the elder was chosen to follow his father, but he failed to retain the position, as Mu'áwiya, the Governor of Syria, a kinsman of 'Uthmán was too powerful for him. Like a wise man Ḥasan yielded the Khalífate to Mu'áwiya and returned to Madína where he settled down to a quiet life

<sup>1</sup> For another reason, see Sell, *The Life of Muḥammad* (C.L.S.), p. 158.

in a hermit cell, quite close to the mosque of his grandfather. Shortly afterwards he was poisoned.

Now, what of the line of 'Alí? Was there no hope of their possessing the Khalífate again? It appears that when Ḥasan had abdicated in favour of Mu'áwiya it was on the understanding that his brother Ḥusain should become the leader of the hosts of Islám after his death, but Mu'áwiya, who had won the support of the Syrians, planned otherwise. He determined that the Khalífate should remain with his family and so ordained that his son, Yazid, should be his successor. This incensed the followers of 'Alí and a strong party in Kúfa sent representations to Ḥusain, that if he would go to them they would rally round him and give him his rightful position. They expressed their disgust at Yazid, nicknamed 'the Polluted'. He was licentious and irreligious, he spent his time with dogs and dancing women, and once when mad with drink, even shot arrows at the Qur'án. He was quite unfit for the position of commander of the faithful. The messages from the Kúfans did not move Ḥusain at first, but after receiving over one hundred and fifty urgent letters, with assurances that at least 140,000 men were ready to fight under his standard, he set off across the deserts of Arabia to meet his friends and claim his right. He took with him his wives, brothers, sisters, nephews, and a few followers on horseback and some on foot. In the meantime, Yazid's officers had suppressed the insurrection in his favour at Kúfa, and despatched an army of about 5,000 men to meet and surround the little party from Madína, and cut off all communication with the city and the river.

On the plains of Karbela, near the banks of the Euphrates, twenty-five miles north-west of Kúfa, the two parties met, and H̄usain saw that he was trapped. It was demanded of him that he surrender unconditionally, which he, a man with tremendous spirit, refused to do. He then urged his followers to escape, but they decided to stay by their master. Afterward, 'the Family of the Tent,' as H̄usain and his little party have been called, dug trenches around their camp, prayed and awaited their end. That end could not be delayed long, as their enemies had planned to cut off all approach to water, so that they would all die of thirst if in no other way.

H̄usain and his followers fought like heroes, but one by one dropped before the clever archery of the vast numbers arrayed against them, and then H̄usain, finding himself the only man left, threw himself among the soldiers, but they were afraid to touch the grandson of the Prophet until Shamir, a name detested by the Shí'ahs, reproached their cowardice, and they fell upon H̄usain and killed him with three and thirty sword and lance thrusts. They then trampled on his body, cut off his head and carried it to the castle of Kúfa where 'Ubaidu'lláh, the Governor of Kúfa, turned the head over with a cane, striking the mouth at the same time. One aged Muslim evidently felt this to be an insult, for he called out, 'Alas! on those lips have I seen the lips of the Prophet of God.'

From that day to this Karbela has ranked as a famous place of pilgrimage. Indeed with the Shí'ahs of Persia it is of more importance than Mecca and Madína. It is estimated that 120,000 pilgrims visit Karbela annually.



Men go to die there, for it will be to their advantage, they think, to be near their favourite Imám on the day of resurrection. The living carry their dead there for burial. The saintly Bishop French, when travelling in the neighbourhood of Karbela, wrote: 'We met a number of caravans laden with—what you would never guess—the coffins of their friends, being transported (one on each side of the asses instead of panniers) to Karbela, where the tombs of Ḥasan and Ḥusain are, carried hundreds of miles by sea and land.'<sup>1</sup>

The first ten days of the Muḥarram, the first month of the Muḥammadan year, are devoted to the commemoration of this the saddest event of Muslim history. It is a month of mourning. The stabbing of 'Alí, the poisoning of Ḥasan and spearing of Ḥusain—the terrible ending of the nearest relatives of Muḥammad—will never be forgotten so long as the Muḥarram is kept as it is at the present time. During the Muḥarram black is worn, lamentation is encouraged, and all the scenes of Karbela are brought before the minds of the people by prayer, sermon, poem and drama.

In large buildings, called Takyas in Persia and Imámbaras and Ḥusain Dalans in India, the whole scene is depicted in a passion drama, performed by actors. Ḥusain is pictured as a martyr. His dangers in the desert, his courage, his devotedness at the time of death—all are shown to a people who display uncommon signs of grief as the life history of their hero is again displayed before them.

In large cities in India the Muḥarram is considered a

<sup>1</sup> Herbert Birks, *Life of T. Valpy French*, vol. ii, p. 50.

very critical period for Government, for the processions march the streets and display their grief—whether real or unreal we cannot say—in a fanatical display of mock warfare, carrying ta'zias, which are supposed to be models of the mausoleums which were erected at Karbela over the remains of Ḥasan and Ḥusain. Ta'zia signifies 'grief'. It is made of every variety of material, according to the ability or fancy of those making them. In India most are made with bamboos covered with coloured paper and tinsel. Wealthy Muḥammadans have been known to make them of more permanent material, such as silver, ivory and sandalwood.

II. *Pietistic*.—The quarrels over the succession to the Khalífate had brought in a class of people whose one desire was political power and worldly influence. They surrounded themselves with men of culture and diplomatic ability; they built themselves palaces of gorgeous splendour, and filled their coffers with untold wealth. This disgusted the religiously inclined among the faithful, and quite early in the history of Islám we hear of the rise of a sect called Şúfis. They were so named from the fact that they wore a coarse garment of Şúf, or wool. There seems to be no doubt, but they began their system as a protest of the soul against worldliness, dead formalism and the idea of a far-away God. The cravings of the soul had not been satisfied, so, influenced by various outside systems of thought, such as Zoroastrianism, Gnosticism and Brahmanism, they gradually developed a kind of spiritual philosophy which in its pantheistic tendency was absolutely alien to the whole spirit of Islám. However, they professed to base all their ideas on texts from the Qur'án, giving

a mystical or spiritual meaning to all those sayings which were taken literally by the orthodox. And this is a remarkable feature in the development of all the sects. They clung to the Qur'ân but interpreted its texts in a way that Muḥammad would never have allowed.

As early as A.D. 700 the mystics of Islâm began to make their influence felt, and not a few women among them became preachers of the new doctrine. Of the latter, Rabi'a, was most renowned. She laid stress upon the cultivation of love to God and ecstasy. Later we have Junaid of Baghdad, and Báyazíd of Bisṭám, and Ḥalláj, a cotton-carder, who was a disciple of Junaid. Ḥalláj became a fearless preacher of the doctrine, and for his heterodoxy was executed in A.D. 922. After him we find many expressing their mystical conceptions and ecstatic feelings in rhyme, and poetry became the very essence of Şúfiism.<sup>1</sup>

The Şúfis call themselves 'travellers'. They expect to pass through seven states or stages. A Şúfí is led up from the natural state, through science, love, seclusion, knowledge, ecstasy and touch, until in the last state self is renounced and consciousness is practically obliterated, for he loses his identity in God, or, to use their phraseology, 'the lover becomes the beloved.'

The following well-known fable illustrates the Súfí idea of identity, which, under the image of love, has been set forth by Jalálu'd-Dín Rúmí, a famous Şúfí poet:—

Once a man came and knocked at the door of his friend.

<sup>1</sup> For a full account, see *Şúfiism* (C.L.S.).

His friend said, 'who art thou, O faithful one?'  
 He said, "'Tis I.' He answered, 'There is no admittance . . . .

Since thy "self" has not yet left thee,  
 Thou must be burned in the fiery flames.'

The poor man went away, and for one whole year  
 Journeyed burning with grief for his friend's  
 absence.

. . . then he went again  
 And drew near the house of his friend.

He knocked at the door in fear and trepidation  
 Lest some careless word might fall from his lips;  
 His friend shouted, 'Who is that at the door?'  
 He answered, "'Tis Thou who art at the door,  
 Beloved',  
 The friend said, 'Since 'tis I, let me come in,  
 There is no room for two 'I's in one house.'<sup>1</sup>

Or to quote another of their poets:—

All sects but multiply the I and Thou;  
 This I and Thou belong to partial being.

When I and Thou, and several being vanish,  
 Then mosque and church shall find thee never more.

Our individual life is but a phantom;  
 Make clear thine eye, and see reality.<sup>2</sup>

These Şúfí doctrines are allied to those of the Hindus. There is the same idea of union of man with God, the same emanation of all things from God, and the same final absorption of all things into the divine essence, but with it all, there is a Muslim predestination which makes all a necessary evolution of the divine being.

<sup>1</sup> *Mathnavi-i-Ma'navi* of Jalálu'd-Dín Rúmí (translation by E. H. Whinfield), pp. 47-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Maḥmūd*, quoted in Vaughan's *Hours with the Mystics*.

To show that the teaching of the Şúfí and that of the Hindu are fundamentally the same we will quote two popular fables :—

### *A Şúfí Story*

A Kurd, perplexed in the ways of fortune, left the desert for the city, where he saw the multitudes all in commotion, every one hastening hither and thither on his special business, and being weary with travel the Kurd lay down to sleep, but fearing lest among so many people he should not know himself when he awoke, he tied a pumpkin round his foot. A knave, who heard him deliberating about the difficulty of knowing himself again, took the pumpkin off the Kurd's foot and tied it round his own. When the Kurd awoke he was bewildered, not knowing:—

'Whether I be I or no,  
If I—the pumpkin why  
on you ?

If you—then where am  
I, and who?'<sup>1</sup>

### *A Hindu Story*

Ribhu, a Hindu sage, is talking to Nidagha, who is waiting for his king. Both see the king and his retinue in the distance. The sage said, 'Tell me which is here the king, and which is any other man?' Nidagha replied. 'The king is he who is seated on the elephant; the others are his attendants.'

'Tell me now, Sir, which is the king and which is the elephant?'

'The elephant,' answered Nidagha, 'is underneath, the king is above him.' To this the sage rejoined, 'What is meant by underneath, and what is termed above?' Upon this Nidagha jumped upon the sage, and said, 'I am above like the king; you are underneath like the elephant.' 'Very well,' said the sage, 'Tell me which of us is you, which is I?'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jámí, *Salaman and Absál* quoted in *Şúfiism* (C.L.S.), p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> *Vishnu Purana* (C.L.S.), Book II, pp. 16, 22 and 75.

One result of Şúfiism was the founding of the Orders of Darwishes, 'those fanatics' to quote Gibbon, 'who turned round in endless rotation and mistook the giddiness of the head for the illumination of the spirit.' These Darwishes are becoming increasingly powerful. They have now over eighty Orders. In Constantinople alone they have two hundred monasteries. While most of these Darwishes adhere to the law of Islám they make much of Dhikr, or exercises, which include 'rememberings,' an idea based on the Qur'án where they are counselled to constantly remember Alláh. They also spend much time in repeating the name of Alláh. But this Dhikr is little more than 'a sort of physical exercise, depending upon the lungs, muscles, and patient practice of the worshipper, and would appear to a Christian the very opposite of rational devotion.' Their symbolism is after the fashion of freemasonry.<sup>1</sup>

Faqírs are to India what Darwishes are to Arabia, Egypt, Persia and Turkey. Their ideas are spreading not only amongst the lower classes, but amongst the educated. An Indian authority says: 'Şúfiism is being revived almost in every corner. If you carefully examine the religious books written or translated by Muslims, you will find seventy-five per cent are on Şúfiism.'<sup>2</sup>

III. *Puritanical*.—About the middle of the eighteenth century there was a strong reaction in Arabia against the lax conduct of the majority of Muslims, and against the innovations and superstitions which had been added to

<sup>1</sup> For a full account, see Sell's *The Religious Orders of Islám* (S. P. C. K., Madras).

<sup>2</sup> *Lucknow Conference Report, 1911*, Article by the Rev. Aḥmad Sháh, p. 85.

the teaching of the Qur'án. This led to a reform movement being started by 'Abdu'l-Wahháb, who was 'a whirlwind of puritanism.' He formed a sect which was named after him, the Wahhábís. His teaching was a call back to primitive Islám.

As Wycliffe, Huss, Dante, Savonarola, and others, had previously in Europe striven for the purity of the Christian Church, chastising the vices and tyranny of the Popes and preachers of their day, so the Wahhábís were puritanical reformers who preached against the indulgences and follies of their fellow-religionists.

The founder of these Muslim revivalists was a man of considerable culture, ability and devotion, and had he not gone back to the strict letter of the Qur'án and traditional books for a basis of reform, but sought out a more rational system in keeping with the progressive spirit of the age, he might have been a benefactor to the benighted millions of Islám. As it is, however, he confirmed the superstitions of a bygone age, and gave them a firmer setting in the ancient Arab mould. He and his disciples emphasized the first principles of Islám and therefore could not tolerate the later accretions, such as Walí, Pír, Saint, and tomb-worship, which had become such a marked feature of the Muḥammadan faith. They began a mad career of despoilation. Tombs, ta'zias and minarets were razed to the ground. They despoiled even the shrine of the martyred Ḥusain, and when they held Mecca and Madína for about nine years, they stripped the mosques of their decorations, and consigned to the flames the rosaries, the silken robes, and all else which was repugnant to their tenets.

Wahhábíism has exercised a mighty influence on

thought and politics in Arabia and in India. In India it has been a means of purging Muslim faith and practice of many heathen customs. Muslim converts from Hinduism still retain much of their heathenism. They contribute to idol festivals and attend idol-worship, often making an offering of a goat or sheep to the idol through the Brahmin priest. They also consult the Hindu calendar and astrologers at the time of the birth of a child. But all these relics of heathenism are not as prevalent as they were before the preachers of Wahnábism came and preached reform.

There are many other sects which cannot be referred to here. We have been able to mention but the main divisions. The subdivisions may be studied in many well-known books. We may, however, mention the Sanúsí Order, or 'the Jesuit Order of Islám.' It has its stronghold in Africa, and its secret agents have been placed on all the new lines of communication in that great land. It is a real live force. It numbers about five million adherents, and has hundreds of monasteries, universities and schools in the Libyan Oasis, Tripoli and the Súdán. This Order has deliberately set itself to clear Islám of every modern taint and to proselytize every pagan tribe. It has the greatest hatred for every Christian and for western civilization, and urges Muslims everywhere to come out from those countries—including Turkey and Egypt—where Christian ideas are found.

NOTE.—The Mosque-like building in the far corner covers the tombs of Muḥammad, Abú Bakr and 'Umar and an open grave left for the sepulture of our Lord Jesus Christ. On this side of the dividing wall may be seen a clump of trees called 'the garden of Fáṭima,' while near by is the well of the Prophet.





The Mosque at Madina enclosing the Tomb of Muhammad. (From ■ coloured bazaar print.)



All these sects we believe to be so many disintegrating forces in Islám. They are expressions of Muslim dissatisfaction. One thing that impressed the writer upon reading the statements of missionaries on Islám in the Report of the Missionary Conference, recently held at Edinburgh, was this: the consensus of opinion was that Muḥammadans found consolation in their faith, but no satisfaction. Now to secure satisfaction the sects of Islám have adopted doctrines of incarnation, atonement, mediation and mystic absorption in God—all of which to the orthodox are nothing but heresies, but these heresies come nearer to Christianity than Islám itself, and bring men closer to the heart of things.

What else may we expect! The doctrine of the divine unity, as taught by the orthodox Muḥammadan, simple and reasonable though it appears to be, does not satisfy the heart or intellect, and it leads to pantheism, if not developed in the direction of the Trinitarian position.

Then the heart needs an atonement and a mediator, which ideas have been emphasized in the exaltation of Ḥusain by the Shí'ahs. On the testimony of quite a number of authorities we learn that the Shí'ahs believe that the martyrdom of Ḥusain was a propitiatory offering of his life for sin. There is a tradition to the effect that he said, when setting out on his last journey, 'How can I forget thy (Muḥammad's) people, since I am going to offer myself for their sakes.' Then in the Passion Play, already mentioned, he is often represented as pressing forward on the way from Madína to Kúfa, not ambitious to secure the Khalífate, but to 'drink the honey of martyrdom,' and thus become a saviour of the sinful among his people. Then, by virtue of his sufferings,

Ḥusain is often regarded as being the first of mediators. Here is a quotation from the drama. Gabriel is supposed to have said to Muḥammad: 'Peace be unto thee, O Muḥammad, the elect, God hath sent thee a message, saying, "None has suffered the pain and afflictions which Ḥusain has undergone. None has, like him, been obedient to my service. As he has taken no steps save in sincerity in all that he has done, thou must put the key of Paradise in his hand. The privilege of making intercession for sinners is exclusively his. Ḥusain is, by my peculiar grace, the mediator for all."' <sup>1</sup>

We feel with the Rev. W. A. Shedd that in the end it may be found 'that the greatest *preparatio evangelica* in Muḥammadan countries is in the religious life outside the lines of the Qur'án, and in the various semi-Muḥammadan sects. The yearning after a mystical union with the Divine, the longing to see the divine image in some human life, the desire for a way of forgiveness opened by the self-sacrifice of divine love instead of the bare fiat of will, the vigils and prayers and aspirations of poets and philosophers, may be the most powerful Christward forces. It may be that many of these are echoes of Christian truth, for the witness of Christ has never been entirely wanting in the lands of Islám; and in any case they are from Him, and He alone can guide these efforts to their goal and satisfy these longings.' <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sir L. Pelly, *The miracle Play of Ḥasan and Ḥusain*, vol. ii, pp. 246—7, quoted in J. Campbell Oman's *Brahmins, Theists and Muslims of India*, pp. 293--4.

<sup>2</sup> *International Review of Missions*, Article by the Rev. W. A. Shedd, D.D., vol. i, No. 2, pp. 292-3.

## CHAPTER IX

### ISLÁM AND CHRISTIANITY

FROM the time of Muḥammad the contact of Islám with Christianity has been very close. They first met when Christianity was at its worst spirituality, and when the sects of Christendom were disunited and very dissatisfied with their Christian rulers. When the armies of the Khalífas overran Egypt, Syria and other lands, where the Christian religion had sway, many of the communities considered the rule of the Muslim conqueror would be an improvement upon that of the Byzantine Emperor, and they submitted after a very feeble resistance. Then Damascus, Jerusalem, Corinth, Smyrna, Thessalonica, and many other cities of Biblical fame, had to yield the Cross for the Crescent.

But in every case there was not meek submission. The contact in many places had been a deadly combat, which continued with more or less bitterness and even slaughter until the crisis of the Crusades, when the severest strain was put upon the adherents of both Faiths. The Crusades sobered Europe. Soon afterwards we find the different countries improving themselves by studying the Moorish philosophers of Andalusia, and adopting their arts, industries and sciences, which had been derived for the most part from Græco-Christian schools of thought.

And is it not likely that the Crusades taught them, too, the lesson that it is not by the sword that the Lord's work can be done? The lesson was hard to learn and there were few to teach it; however, there was one whose conscience smote him on this score, and he was quick to tell it out. We refer to Raymund Lull, a missionary to Muslims, who, in the year A. D. 1300, wrote: 'I see many knights going to the Holy Land beyond the seas, and thinking that they can acquire it by force of arms; but in the end all are destroyed before they attain that which they think to have. Whence it seems to me that the conquest of the Holy Land ought not to be attempted except in the way in which Thou, O Lord, and Thine apostles acquired it, namely, by love and prayers and the pouring out of tears and blood.'<sup>1</sup> Lull was the prophet of a new contact, a restorer of a belief in the old commission of the risen Christ, who had promised His constant presence as a power to remain and work with every believing preacher of the Evangel. It is by love and prayer and sacrifice, and preaching of a Christianity based upon the Scriptures, that can bring Muslims into touch with our Lord, the world's Saviour.

I. *Points of Contact*.—There was so much of Christianity in the belief of Islām, that in ancient times many looked upon Muḥammad as one of the chief heresiarchs of the Christian Church. The religions touch at many points.

1. In Islām high honour is given to the Christian Scriptures.—They are mentioned one hundred and thirty

<sup>1</sup> Zwemer, *Raymund Lull*, p. 52.

times in the Qur'án in the most laudable terms. They are said to have been revealed from God and to be worthy of equal reverence and faith with the Qur'án. These Scriptures are divided into Taurát, Zabúr and Injíl, or Evangel, which are known to us as the Pentateuch, Psalms of David, and Gospel. From certain references we think he must have known something about the prophets as well. The Bible, as he did know it, was given the noblest titles. It is called—The Book ;<sup>1</sup> The Book of God ;<sup>2</sup> The Word of God ;<sup>3</sup> A Light and Guidance to man ;<sup>4</sup> A decision for all Matters, and a Guidance and a Mercy ;<sup>5</sup> The Lucid Book ;<sup>6</sup> The Illumination (al-Furqán), a title applied to the Qur'án and Pentateuch alike ;<sup>7</sup> The Evangel (Gospel) with its guidance and light, confirmatory of the preceding Law ; a Guidance and warning to those who fear God.<sup>8</sup>

These Scriptures are constantly appealed to in points of controversy between Jews, Christians and Muḥammadans, and every one is commanded to believe in them. Jews and Christians are told in the most emphatic terms that they are 'not grounded upon anything,' until they 'observe the Law and the Gospel';<sup>9</sup> and Muḥammadans are threatened with the lurid flames of hell if they treat 'the message with which we sent our Sent Ones, as a lie.'<sup>10</sup> Therefore, as Marcus Dods says, 'Muḥammadans are in the awkward predicament of being obliged

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 73, 81.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. (ii) 70.

<sup>5</sup> Súratu'l-An'ám (vi) 155.

<sup>7</sup> Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 50.

<sup>9</sup> Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 72.

<sup>2</sup> Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 48.

<sup>4</sup> Súratu'l-An'ám (vi) 92.

<sup>6</sup> Súratu's-Şáffát (xxxvii) 119.

<sup>8</sup> Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 50.

<sup>10</sup> Súratu'l-Mú'min (xx) 72.

by their religion to believe in what explodes their religion.'

There are very few actual quotations from the Bible in the Qur'án. We will mention three. From the Pentateuch we read: 'Verily we have sent down the Law (Taurát) . . . and therein have we enacted for them, "Life for life, and eye for eye, and nose for nose, and ear for ear, and tooth for tooth and for wounds retaliation."' <sup>1</sup> This is an unmistakable reference to a text in the book of Exodus. From the Psalms we read: 'And now, since the Law was given, have we written in the Psalms that "my servants, the righteous, shall inherit the earth."' <sup>2</sup> This is clear. From the Gospels we read: 'Nor shall they enter Paradise until the camel passeth through the eye of the needle.' <sup>3</sup> This is evidently a quotation from the New Testament, for there is not known to be any similar passage in any Apocryphal Gospel, and in the Rabbinic form of the proverb the elephant is substituted for camel.

If we found in the Qur'án but this one fact, that the Bible is a revelation from heaven, and that it was constantly appealed to by Muḥammad we should have a powerful argument for our preaching to Muslims the unsearchable riches of Christ. But we have more.

2. In Islám high honour is given to our Lord Jesus Christ.—True the Qur'án account of His life and mission is a very disjointed one, but it is remarkable all the same.

The Annunciation: That event unique in human

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 48-9; see Exod. xxi. 23-4.

<sup>2</sup> Súratu'l-Anbiyá' (xxi) 105; see Ps. xxxvii. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Súratu'l-A'râf (vii) 38; see Matt. xix. 24.



history, is told as follows—The angel, Gabriel, comes and says: ‘O Mary! Verily God sendeth thee good tidings that thou shalt bear the Word proceeding from Himself; his name shall be Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, illustrious in this world, and in the next, and one of those who have near access to God.’<sup>1</sup> The latter part of this verse signifies great distinction. The commentator, Zamakhshari, in his al-Kashsháf, says it means ‘The office of prophet and supremacy over man in this world; and in the next world the office of intercessor and loftiness of rank in Paradise.’<sup>2</sup>

The Virgin Birth: Muḥammad taught this most clearly. He says: ‘Remember when the angels said, “O Mary! Verily hath God chosen thee, and purified thee, and chosen thee above the women of the worlds” ’<sup>3</sup>

Christ’s stainless nature: ‘We sent our Spirit to her (Mary) . . . to bestow on (her) a holy Son.’<sup>4</sup> How like this is to the message recorded by the Evangelist Luke: ‘That holy thing which shall be born of thee.’

His unique titles: Muḥammad gave to Christ more striking titles than he gave to any other prophet. He called him al-Masīḥ—the Messiah;<sup>5</sup> Kalimatu’lláh—the Word of God;<sup>6</sup> Rúḥu’lláh—Spirit of God;<sup>7</sup> Qaulu’l-Ḥaqq—The Speech of the Truth.<sup>8</sup> These titles do not mean to the average Muslim what they do to the Christian. To the Muslim they lack entirely the content of deity, and are devoid of any attribute or character.

<sup>1</sup> Súratu Áli ‘Imrán (iii) 40.

<sup>2</sup> Goldsack, *Christ in Islám* (C.L.S.), p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Súratu Áli ‘Imrán (iii) 37.

<sup>4</sup> Súratu Maryam (xix) 19.

<sup>5</sup> Súratu Áli ‘Imrán (iii) 40.

<sup>6</sup> & <sup>7</sup> Súratu ‘n-Nisá’ (iv) 169.

<sup>8</sup> Súratu Maryam (xix) 35.

In the Qur'án the name Jesus is never used for our Lord. He is always referred to under the name of 'Isá, which is believed to be a corruption of the Hebrew *Yeshu*. Baiḍáwí, the famous commentator, states that it is so. Opinions differ as to the reason why it was given its present form. Some say that it represents the Hebrew Esau, and when the Jews wished to caricature the name of Jesus they did so by calling him Esau. But a more likely explanation is to be found in the Oriental law of correspondence or proportion. It consists in a system of rhyming of words or names, thus Cain in the Qur'án is changed into Kabil to rhyme with Ḥabíl. Aaron becomes Ḥárún, and Korah is turned into Kárún to make proportion. There are many such instances. What then could be more likely than that Jesus, the bringer of the Gospel, should be made to rhyme with Moses the name of the founder of the Law, thus, Músá—'Isá.<sup>1</sup>

His superhuman works: The Qur'án says our Lord healed 'one blind from his birth, and the leper, and brought forth the dead from their graves,'<sup>2</sup> which shows that He moved about 'doing good' and lived a life of sympathy. It says, too, that he created birds of clay, and after blowing upon them caused them to fly. This is a story from the Apocryphal Gospels that we do not accept, but its place in the Qur'án proves how very highly Christ was esteemed by the Prophet.

His unique Ascension: Christ, according to Islám, was taken up bodily to heaven and is now alive, and

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Article on *The Name of 'Isá*, by the Rev. I. Loewenthal, reprinted in *The Moslem World*, vol. i, p. 267.

<sup>2</sup> Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 109-10.

from this fact it may reasonably be inferred that he alone of all the prophets is able to intercede. Then it is a firm tenet of the Muslim Faith that our Lord will come again, and be 'a sign to all mankind' of the near approach of the day of doom.

There are many other points of contact, though not any so direct as those mentioned. We should always remember that both Muḥammadans and Christians believe in the Unity of God, in book revelations, in inspired prophets, in a resurrection of the dead, and a final judgement with rewards and punishment. The Muslim could subscribe to much in the Apostles' Creed. He could say 'I believe in God . . . Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ . . . Who was born of the Virgin Mary . . . and ascended into heaven . . . and shall come again . . . I believe in the communion of saints . . . the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.'

But what of all the gaps? It will be seen that the Muslim has much in common with the Christian, but what do the gaps mean? They mean direct denials of truth, which have made such disagreement between the two Faiths, that reconciliation is made infinitely more difficult than if there was no agreement at all. These denials must be faced, for around them controversy has always waxed strong and bitter and will continue to do so, so long as the Muslim refuses to study the Scriptures thoughtfully and prayerfully.

II. *Points of Conflict.*—We often think that Muḥammad would never have wished to formulate a new faith, if he had met constantly with a true conception of the Christian Faith. The more one studies the subject, the

more increasingly clear it appears that Islām originated in a corrupt Christianity, and ‘sprang from the ashes of an extinguished missionary fire.’ Church historians tell us that passionate contentions and party strifes had rent the Church throughout Arabia, and errors so dominated the Churches that one of the Church Fathers of the period dubbed Arabia ‘the Mother of Heresies.’ There were Arians, Sabellians, Nestorians, Docetiens, Mariamites, Collyridians, Ebionites, Basilidians and many other Gnostic sects. Some practised Mariolatry; others denied the deity of Christ; the Sonship of Christ was carnally considered, and the Trinity was distorted into a triad; the death of our Lord was to many a stupid enigma, devoid of meaning, while others taught that Christ escaped death, Simon of Cyrene—some say Judas—being slain in His stead by mistake or by cunning.

It was in the midst of such rank heresy, lifelessness and schism that Muḥammad arose and his whole nature went out in revolt :—

Strong those contending mysteries to displace

By one plain ancient creed.

We cannot but admire him for his crusade against the blatant polytheism outside the Church and the thinly disguised idolatry within, but we deplore the fact that he did not learn more of the true and less of the false. A careful reading of the Qur’án should convince one that primarily his opposition is against rank heresy, still it has led him to deny or misrepresent every fundamental fact bearing upon God’s great plan of redemption. In combating the caricature, he killed the real thing so far as his system was concerned.

1. Denial of the Trinity, the Divine Sonship, and Incarnation. Having misunderstood these sublime truths he has given to the world a gross perversion of them. The Trinity he understood to consist of 'the Father, Mother (Mary) and Son ('Isá).'<sup>1</sup> 'They surely are Infidels who say 'God is the third of three': for there is no God but one God.'<sup>2</sup> With such views on the Trinity how can we expect anything but a carnal conception of the Divine Sonship! Muḥammad asks: 'Sole Maker of the heavens and the earth! how, when He hath no consort, should He have a son?'<sup>3</sup> 'The Christians say, 'The Messiah is a son of God' . . . God do battle with them! How are they misguided.'<sup>4</sup> 'It beseemeth not God to beget a son.'<sup>5</sup> It is evident that the words 'beget' and 'begotten' were a stumbling block to him, as they have been to others, in regard to the birth of Christ. But such are the limitations of human thought and language, that when we speak of the mysteries of the Godhead we are obliged to use words which to a non-Christian may mean something altogether different from that which they are intended to convey. But the Bible is as pronounced as Muḥammad was against a carnal conception of the Divine Sonship, and we are amazed to-day when any educated Muslim accepts the carnal view as being the doctrine of the Christian Church.

Muḥammad always denied the deity of Jesus. He used to ask how Jesus and his mother could be divine when 'they both ate food'?<sup>6</sup>. He was so emphatic on

<sup>1</sup> Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 116.

<sup>2</sup> Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 77.

<sup>3</sup> Súratu'l-An'ám (vi) 101.

<sup>4</sup> Súratu't-Tauba (ix) 30-31.

<sup>5</sup> Súratu Maryam (xix) 36.

<sup>6</sup> Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 79.

the subject, that when the Christians of Najrán sent a deputation to him, headed by their bishop, Abú Harítha, he made the nature of Christ the principal subject of discussion, and adopted the strange method of coming to a decision on the matter by mutual cursing.<sup>1</sup> He said 'Come, let us summon our sons and your sons, our wives and your wives, and ourselves and yourselves. Then will we invoke and lay the curse of God on those who lie.'<sup>2</sup>

In Islám there has been a serious misunderstanding of the truth of the Holy Spirit. He is sometimes confused with Gabriel, and sometimes with the Prophet himself. Muḥammad claimed that our Lord had foretold his coming. He is supposed to have announced 'an apostle that shall come after me whose name shall be Aḥmad.'<sup>3</sup> From John xvi. 7, we know that Christ promised that a Paracletos, Advocate or Comforter, should come, that He would be the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father, but Muḥammad chose to think that Christ had said Periclytos, which comes from the same root as one of his own names, Aḥmad, meaning 'praised'. But Muḥammad was unfortunate in applying such a prophecy to himself, as it plainly says that the One foretold would come in the time of the disciples, and that the world should not see Him nor know Him.

2. Denial of the atoning sacrifice of our Lord. The Qur'án denies the fact that Christ died, yet tells of preparation being made for taking his life, and how, by some clever piece of hypnotism, God deceived Christ's would-

<sup>1</sup> *Rauḍatu'ş-Şafá*, vol. ii. p. 191, quoted in *The Life of Muḥammad* (C.L.S.), p. 207.

<sup>2</sup> *Súratu Áli 'Imrán* (iii) 54.

<sup>3</sup> *Súratu'ş-Şaff* (lxi) 6.

be murderers at the last moment and took Him up unto Himself. But the Qur'án is not consistent in its teaching on this subject. Jesus is made to say: 'The peace of God was on me the day I was born, and will be the day I shall die, and the day I shall be raised to life.'<sup>1</sup> And again: 'Remember when God said, "O Jesus! verily I will cause thee to die, and will take thee up to Myself and deliver thee from those who believe not."'<sup>2</sup> These verses, taken in connexion with other teaching in the Qur'án on Christ's death, the Muslim commentators have been unable to explain. Imám Fakhrú'd-dín Rází ends up a mixture of comments on the Qur'án statements with these words: 'These are the various explanations. The Lord only knoweth the true one.'

But to deny such a fact, authenticated by reliable testimony from Apostles, Church Fathers, Christian and non-Christian historians, and Christian monumental institutions, shows either an uncommon conceit, or appalling ignorance on the part of the Prophet.

Notwithstanding the denial of Christ's death, God has not left Himself without witness, even in Islám, in regard to the need for sacrifice. True, in the Qur'án there is a profound ignorance of the need of a true atonement for sin. The terrible nature of sin as depicted in the Bible—sin which alienates men from God—is almost unknown in Islám. Muḥammad taught that there had been a fall and that all men were sinners, but some faults were so unimportant that Alláh took no notice of them. We know that all good Muslims live a

<sup>1</sup> Súratu Maryam (xix) 34.

<sup>2</sup> Súratu Áli 'Imrán (iii) 48.

life of dread. They are afraid lest some unpardonable sin will cast them finally into hell-fire. This dread brings some sense of sin, but not that as understood by the Christian. That God's justice demanded satisfaction, or that man needed reconciliation, are ludicrous ideas to a Muslim, although, strange to say, the Muslims have customs which certainly point to the idea of propitiatory sacrifice and substitution.

The most striking is the rite called 'Aqīqa. It is a ceremony enjoined by Muslim law to be observed by Muḥammadans everywhere. It is a kind of service of dedication of an infant, at which the child receives a name. The hair of the child is allowed to grow until the seventh day, when it is shaved for the first time, then the father sacrifices one or two sheep or goats in the name of the child, at the same time repeating an Arabic formula, which, being translated, is, 'O God I offer to Thee, instead of my own offspring, life for life, blood for blood, head for head, bone for bone, hair for hair, skin for skin. In the name of the Great God I sacrifice this animal.' Afterwards, as at the Jewish Passover, the flesh is cooked and eaten by relatives and friends.

Then at the festival called 'Idu'l-aḍḥá or Bakar 'Id, cows, sheep, goats or camels are sacrificed with a prayer of consecration, following the example of the Prophet, who, when establishing the rite, sacrificed one kid, saying, 'O Lord I sacrifice this for my whole people, all who bear witness to the Unity, and to my prophetship.' Slaying a second he said, 'O Lord, this is for Muḥammad and for the family of Muḥammad.'

Concerning the latter festival, a remarkable tradition



has been handed down from 'Áyisha. The Prophet is said to have told her that: 'Man hath not done anything on the 'Idu'l-adḥá more pleasing to God than spilling blood. Verily the blood of the animal reacheth acceptance of God before it falleth upon the ground, therefore be joyful in it.'<sup>1</sup>

Surely in these customs we have an indirect witness to the truth that sacrifice is a law of the religious life, which law was fulfilled in the One, who 'once at the end of the ages hath been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.'

In regard to all the points of conflict between Islám and Christianity, it is well to remember that they are connected with the profoundest mysteries of our Faith, and are just those points which the human mind in its finite weakness finds most difficult to grasp and accept. They have often perplexed the Church of God, when explanations have been asked for, and that is to be expected of revealed truths, for who can fathom the mind of the Infinite? To understand revealed truths as God understands them, we would need to be equal with God. Unaided reason can do little more than question and criticize, but the believer finds his spiritual vision illumined the more he calls faith and obedience to his aid.

To sum up: Muḥammad, while saying many fine things about Christ and the Scriptures, has stripped the Christian religion of every vital truth by which it lives and flourishes. In the words of the Apostle Paul, it lives, as he did, 'by the faith of the Son of God.'

<sup>1</sup> *Mishkátu'l-Muṣābiḥ*, Book 4, Chapter 42, Section 2.

Syed Amir 'Alí says: 'Except for the conception of the Sonship of Jesus there is no fundamental difference between Christianity and Islám.'<sup>1</sup> Evidently the author considers that this is an idea that could be easily dispensed with; but to do away with it would be to end Christianity, for the truth of the divine Sonship is not a mere doctrine, but an essential part, round which all other truths group themselves. It is inseparably connected with the nature of God, which is eternal love, and with the sacrifice on the cross of Calvary, which was a demonstration of that love, and it is also inseparably connected with the Sonship of all true believers in Christ. Taking this two-fold conception as a basis of Christian truth, believers enter into every spiritual experience understood by such terms as regeneration, faith, justification, and sanctification. To some these may be mere doctrinal names or ideas to which nominal assent is given, but to the believer they are expressions of joyous experiences, entered into by a conversion or change of heart and a daily progression in an inward or godly life.

It has been said by philosophers in many different ways that, 'The idea of God is the productive and conservative principle of civilization; as is the religion of a community, so will be in the main its morals, its laws, its general history.' The fundamental idea underlying Islám is, that men are related to the Creator as slaves to a celestial Sultán, which idea has shaped all their relationships in this life—domestic, social and political. But the fundamental truth in Christianity is that all men may enjoy the blessed relationship of sons with a

<sup>1</sup> Syed Amir 'Alí, *The Spirit of Islám*, pp. 158-9.

Father, and all the love, fellowship and communion indicated in such a privilege. And this gives the Christian victory over that trinity of evil—the world, the flesh and the devil. ‘This is the victory that overcometh the world; even our Faith.’ ‘Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.’

One thing that strikes a believer in Christ, when he comes to weigh Islám as a means of salvation, is its utter inability to give assurance of salvation, which every true Christian enjoys upon experiencing the peace of God produced through a knowledge of sins forgiven. We know that careful attention to religious duties may affect a man’s life and attitude very considerably; but only through a new birth, as Christ taught it by the power of the Holy Spirit, can a vital change take place in man’s life and character.

The true Christian enters into a new experience. John Flavel puts it very finely when he says, it is, ‘An undoubted truth that faith in Christ brings the pardoned soul into that condition and state where he may find perfect rest in his conscience with respect to the guilt and danger of sin.’

Has the Muslim the same confidence? Has he the same rest in respect to his guilt? It is said of Abú Bakr, the immediate successor of Muḥammad, that on the day of his death he said to his daughter ‘Áyisha, ‘O my daughter, this is the day of my release and obtaining of my desert; if gladness, it will be lasting; if sorrow, it will never cease.’ And this in spite of the fact that the Prophet had once told him that he should never see hell.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rice, *Crusaders of the Twentieth Century*, pp. 439.

Of 'Umar, the second Khalifa, we read that Muḥammad in his nocturnal visit to heaven saw a marvellous palace prepared for him to dwell in, yet, at the end of his life, he said: 'Verily, I am longing for the salvation of myself, and of you also.' Then to the Companions of the Prophet by whom he was surrounded, he said: 'I am none other than as a drowning man, who seeth possibility of escape with life and hopeth for it, but feareth he may die and lose it, and so plungeth about with hands and feet. More desperate than the drowning man is he who at the sight of heaven and hell is buried in the vision.' So saying he wept, and those around wept with him. Those by him tried to console him by recalling his good deeds, but 'Umar called out: 'Whom are ye trying to deceive? Had I the whole East and the West, gladly would I give up all to be delivered from this awful terror that is hanging over me.'<sup>1</sup>

'Āli, the son-in-law of the Prophet, 'fainted seventy times a night from fear of God.'<sup>2</sup> Other great Muslim leaders expressed the same dread. It would seem that all their good works, faith in the Prophet, almsgiving, and all the intercession of all the saints, were of no avail to comfort these conscience-stricken men. There is lacking altogether that joyous confidence and ringing assurance of victory, which are so noticeable in the Apostles of our Lord. To cite one, the Apostle Paul. That he had an infallible assurance of salvation, and sure evidence of an inward experience, and knew what he was talking about, he tells often about his marvellous conversion and the change that came into his life when

<sup>1</sup> Rice, *Crusaders of the Twentieth Century*, pp. 440-1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 439.

he met with Jesus. And the experience was strengthened with time; we find him saying, 'I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.'<sup>1</sup> This was near the end of his life when he wrote his last epistle. He further said, 'I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day: and not only to me, but also to all them that have loved His appearing.'<sup>2</sup>

Muhammad's truth lay in a holy book,

Christ's in a sacred life.

So while the world rolls on from change to change,

And realms of thought expand,

The letter stands without expanse or range,

Stiff as a dead man's hand;

While, as the life-blood fills the growing form,

The spirit Christ has shed

Flows through the ripening ages fresh and warm,

More felt than heard or read.<sup>3</sup>

## NOTE

### POINTS OF CONTRAST IN ETHICAL TEACHING

#### Qur'án

1. When ye encounter the infidels, strike off their heads. . . . As for the infidels, let them perish.

Súratu Muhammad (xlvii)

4, 9.

#### New Testament

1. All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them. Matt. vii. 12.

<sup>1</sup> II Tim. i. 12.

<sup>2</sup> II Tim. iv. 7-8.

<sup>3</sup> *Palm Leaves*, p. 28.

## Qur'án

## New Testament

2. O Prophet! make war on the infidels and hypocrites; deal rigorously with them.

Súratu't-Taḥrim (lxvi) 9.

3. Kill them (unbelievers) wherever ye shall find them, and eject them from whatever place they have ejected you. . . . If they desist, then let there be no hostility, save against the wicked.

Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 187-9.

4. O Prophet! we allow thee thy wives whom thou hast dowered, and the slaves whom thy right hand possesseth. . . and any believing woman who hath given herself up to the Prophet, if the Prophet desired to wed her.

Súratu'l-Aḥzáb (xxxiii) 49.

5. Ye may divorce your wives twice. . . . If the husband divorce her a third time, it is not lawful for him to take her again, until she shall have married another husband.

Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 229-30.

2. Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. Matt. v. 39.

3. Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you. Matt. v. 43-4.

4. Every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. Matt. v. 28.

5. Every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery. Matt. v. 32.

## Qur'án

6. They whose balances (of good works) shall be heavy, shall be blest. But they whose balances shall be light, they are they who shall lose their souls, abiding in hell for ever.

Súratu'l-Mu'minún (xxiii)  
105-6.

## New Testament

6. When the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward men, appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us. Titus iii. 4-5.

## CHAPTER X

### THE FUTURE OF ISLÁM

IT is not our intention to prophesy, but to write down certain facts which give scope for speculation. No one acquainted with the past and present history of Islám can deny that its power is not what it once was. For a long period now the political and intellectual history of Islám has been the history of arrested progress. By this we do not mean that the number of the votaries of the Faith has decreased, but that Islám has decayed in everything that counts in real progress.

The prestige of Islám as a church-state is gone. In Muḥammadan history that ideal has often been realized, but now is completely shattered for the majority of the Faithful. Large tracts of territory once governed by Islám have passed into other hands, and over two-thirds of the Muḥammadans of the world have become the subjects of Christian races. Of these, fully one hundred and fifty millions have come under Christian rule since the year 1800. There are not wanting signs that in Islám, church and state may be separated absolutely, and the function of the Khalífate may become that of a Muslim Pope with no temporal power and no control over the affairs of the kingdom in which he happens to live.



Why has Islám been unable to uphold its ideal? Simply because a check has been put upon its sword. On that Islám used to rely ; by that it made rapid conquest and maintained its religio-political power. Dr. Zwemer says: 'The sword is in its sheath, but the giant still wears it at his side, and it has never been rusty.' That is true, but the pattern of the sword has become as old as the pattern of the Faith ; they both fail to comply with modern requirements, so it has been impossible for Islám to maintain its ideal by the force of arms. Whether Islám will see a return of its golden age is doubtful, since that would necessitate a vast improvement in military equipment, which could be gained only through painstaking instruction in western schools. Hence many Muslims are looking to the Turks for their salvation. It is thought that since the progressives have brought in a modern constitution for their government, so, like the Japanese, they may bring their weapons of warfare up to the standard of the best-equipped nations. We know they are doing so. They are modelling their army after the German type, and their navy after the British, but there seems to be a serious inaptitude about the Turk. He is a born soldier and he adopts new models and inventions—he has never invented anything himself, no Muslim ever has—but he relies upon Christians for the management and upkeep of all the modern appliances he adopts. This is his constant weakness. Competent authorities tell us that the railways, steamers, telegraphs, factories and newspapers in the Ottoman Empire would go to pieces but for Christians. We do not see much hope then for the future of Islám from the arms of the Turks. Their power is limited. We are

inclined rather to look in the direction of the Indian frontier for a strong race to take advantage of some opportunity to lead the forces of Islám, and who knows, perhaps the Amír of Afghánistán himself is ambitious to become the Khalífa.

There is somewhat of a military danger in the large battalions of Muslims being trained by European officers in Egypt, the Súdán, India and other Christian dependencies. In some places, British authorities encourage pagans to be cricumcised and become Muslims. It is indispensable for entry into the ranks. If these regiments trained in the western use of arms ever join in a general rising against Christian peoples, we shall have our own governments to blame.

One thing might stir the latent fanaticism at any moment—the coming of the Imám Máhdí. We see the possibility of a strong man coming upon the scene and claiming to be the long-expected one who will be the saviour and defender of the Faith. We can imagine Muḥammadans everywhere sinking their differences because of his call to a Jihád, and acting in unison to bring in once more the lost ideal. To accomplish such a feat, Pan-Islámism would need all its lines of communication well-laid and well-organized. Such a movement would be serious for many parts of Asia, and it is in such a movement that the men trained by British officers would be a strength, but it would eventually bring to an end for ever the last remnant of political Islám.

But why dilate further on the military phase; it is an interesting problem; there are other important aspects to be considered, and it is questionable whether the majority of the Muḥammadans of the world, who live under

Christian rulers and know little of politics, are concerned with whether Islám has gained or lost territory, or the Khalífa lost temporal power. Living as subject peoples under laws admittedly superior to those of the Turks and Arabs, they are content with things as they are. Not that they are indifferent. They have a real concern for the safety of Islám as a religious belief, and the position of the Khalífa as their spiritual head, and they find genuine satisfaction in the numerical progress of their Faith. Now such progress might be a sign of power if the converts were from highly civilized people, but they are not; they are from the pagan races within the limits of the 'heat belt,' drawn largely to Islám by its sensuous attractions.

But to thoughtful Muslims the numerical advance is not of such importance; they deplore the moral and spiritual decadence of their Faith, and are feeling about for reasons to account for it, and for a remedy.

(1) Many blame their religious leaders. An enlightened Muslim, telling of his experiences at Mecca, says: 'To-day the Mullás of Mecca mount a pulpit and air their erudition, that is, their knowledge of the traditions, as they interpret them according to their respective schools, and end with a few wandering, lifeless sentences in condemnation of all heretics, in contempt of this life, and in praise of the world to come. A philosopher would consider their sermons ridiculous. . . . The wonder is that a Faithful can be found to obey the behests of these tradition-ridden miracle-mongers, who do nothing to lessen the breach between the sects, but leave the more enlightened laymen to lead the way to re-union. My Meccan experiences prove this, that the faith of

the priest is stagnant from the want of the breath of reason. In its decadence Islám is priest-begotten and priest-ridden.' He tells of the self-interest of these men. The wasting breath of selfishness, like a sirocco, has dried up all sympathy for the welfare of those they are supposed to help. He says: 'It is not the light of religion which they spread abroad. It is the fire of fanaticism which they fan—a fire which by throwing out abundant heat, but no light whatever, burns while diffusing darkness.'<sup>1</sup>

Such is the condition of the religious leaders at the recognized fountain-head of Islám. It may be objected that the writer was a Shí'ah Muslim, and therefore would have a bias against the Sunní Mullás of Mecca. Being an outsider and a pilgrim, we think, he was better able to judge. But even supposing he has exaggerated, he has drawn a true picture of thousands of the preachers of Islám in other parts of the world. They lack 'the breath of reason'; they fan 'the fire of fanaticism,' and are always the clog on the wheels of progress. In Bengal, intelligent and spiritually-minded Maulavís are rare. It is proverbial that the few who go to the Madrassa to read Arabic and Persian, do so to secure a certificate whereby they may be able to teach in some school, and *not* to be spiritual guides to the people.

(2) Others again, particularly the enlightened Muslims of India, Egypt, and Turkey, see the cause of the decline of Islám in the loose laws of polygamy, divorce, concubinage and slavery. By these laws their women have been degraded, their families depraved and their

<sup>1</sup> Hadji Khan, *With the Pilgrims to Mecca*, pp. 123, 151.

society demoralized. Dr. Fairbairn says: 'A religion that does not purify the home cannot regenerate the race; one that depraves the home is certain to deprave humanity. Motherhood is to be sacred if manhood is to be honourable. Spoil the wife of sanctity, and for the men the sanctities of life have perished. And so it has been with Islám. It has reformed and lifted savage tribes; it has depraved and barbarized civilized nations. At the root of its fairest culture, a worm has ever lived that has caused its blossoms soon to wither and die.'<sup>1</sup> Enlightened Muslims now understand this perhaps better than Europeans do, because they are face to face with the problem all the time. They see that if they would keep abreast with real progress and toe the line with advanced nations, there must be a radical change made in respect to these vitiating practices. 'A great deal of our social evils,' says Mr. Bukhsh, 'is due to the condition of our woman-kind, and so long as we keep them in ignorance we cannot hope to impart to our children those lofty virtues which adorn a civilized and free people. . . . To our mind the true emancipation of womankind must indefinitely be put off so long as the system of polygamy flourishes, drawing its sanction from religion.'<sup>2</sup>

(3) Some are putting the axe to the root of tradition and its many branches of absurd superstition. Popular Islám is not derived from the Qur'án, but from popular manuals provided in the vernaculars of the people, in which the most childish stories and absurd caricatures of truth are presented to the immature mind as the religion of God. The stories as given in these

<sup>1</sup> Fairbairn, *The City of God*, pp. 97-8.

<sup>2</sup> S. K. Bukhsh, *Essays: Indian and Islámic*, pp. 217, 256.

manuals are usually more grotesque than their originals in the standard traditional books. The most popular subjects are those dealing with the creation, the judgement, intercession, heaven and hell. This traditionalism is regarded as one of the worst of stagnating causes.

(4) Another party, particularly the Young Turk party, has touched a vital point when it has attacked in press and pulpit the despotic form of Government which exists in all lands under direct Muslim rule. At the time of the revolution in Turkey, when the progressives were planning the deposition of the Sultán, 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd, the renowned mosque of St. Sophia was often used for voicing the opinions of the reform party. One, Eshref Edib Bey, preaching there, said: 'The religion of Islám has not been able to remain free from the influence of the despotism which has brought all our institutions into decline.' Another, Ismá'íl Hakki Efendí, preaching on 'The Rights of the people', said: 'The jurists of Persia, it seems, are against constitutionalism. Those rascals have always been on the side of autocracy! A group of Persian 'Uláma belonging to the royalists are clamouring for despotic government. The jurists solemnly declare that this is not their own ruling, but that of the canon law of Muḥammadanism. They pretend to think it just that millions of people should be surrendered into the hands of a knavish despot to be ruled at his caprice.'<sup>1</sup>

It is clear to us that such men will have to abandon the Qur'án, or, if the orthodox party be too powerful for them, rely upon certain ambiguities or contradictions

of the Qur'án to make good their position. We believe that even the idea of a democracy might be obtained from passages in their sacred book and from sayings of the Prophet, but it would lack the essential truth inherent in the Christian ideal.

Islám has a sort of brotherhood, but it comes far short of the true, because it denies the Fatherhood, and upholds instead the idea that God is a despotic Celestial Sultán.

As we have said before, the constitution of a State is found in the last analysis to be based upon the people's conception of God. It remains to be seen how far Muslims will be able to proceed along the lines of progress with such a serious cleavage between despotism and democracy.

We have said enough to show that, on the statements of Muḥammadans themselves, in Islám to-day the religious leaders, the traditional beliefs and practices, and the basal principle of their political constitution are hindrances to progress. The world has out-grown them all.

Muḥammadans have become so exercised upon this subject of the decline of Islám that they have held conferences to consider what should be done. In 1899 twenty-three delegates from all parts of the Muslim world assembled in Mecca for fourteen days with the one purpose—'to investigate into the cause of the decay of Islám.' Fifty-seven reasons were given, including fatalism, the opposition of science, rejection of religious liberty, neglected education, Ottoman rule, and inactivity due to hopelessness of the cause. In all these reasons do we not find an indictment of the Faith? They mean that Islám is too fatalistic and opposed to science and religious liberty, and its followers are too ignorant to

move with the times. It is clear, then, that Islám, not only as a military power but as a Faith, is in a serious state of decadence.

Revival or Reform—which? What is being done for its restoration? Christianity when in decline has a revivifying power within itself; not so Islám, when shorn of its military strength. Attempts have been made to revive it from within, but the revival only increased the malady. Wahnábíism only pressed more heavily the burden of law and tradition and pre-mediævalism, while the Senúsí Order, with its ultra-Wahnábíism, has retired farther into the desert and fanaticism, away from all civilizing influences. It is obsessed with the idea that the only ground upon which Muslim and Christian or infidel may legitimately meet, is the battlefield.

All is hopeless within; its only hope is in adapting the Faith to outside influences, and the cry has gone forth to reform. We are told that in the Levant there are hundreds of newspapers and 'every one of them is crying reform. It is political reform that they claim to want. But with Muḥammadans politics are never to be separated from religion.' In Cairo the papers are more definite. Mr. Swan says: 'In the local Arabic Muḥammadan press, articles are directed against divorce, the Muḥammadan religious law, Muḥammad's right to be lawgiver, Dhikrs Saint worship, etc. Many of these things that are being said by Muḥammadan papers, are so strong that if we had dared to say them, we would probably have brought ourselves into conflict with the Government.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *World's Missionary Conference, Edinburgh, 1910*: vol. iv, p. 132.



Can Islám be reformed? Dr. Murray Mitchell, writing in India long ago, said: 'Some writers have dreams of the possibility of a reformed Islám, but a reformed Islám would not be Islám.'<sup>1</sup> Lord Cromer, writing of Egypt, says the same thing, using nearly the same words: 'Reformed Islám is Islám no longer—it is something else, and we cannot yet tell what it will eventually be . . . Christian nations may advance in civilization, freedom and morality, in philosophy, science and arts, but Islám stands still, thus stationary, so far as the lessons of history avail, it will remain.' And who that knows the unchangeable nature of Muḥammad's precepts and practices in Islám can deny the truth of this.

What attempt at reform has been made and whither does it tend? Modernism in the Roman Catholic Church has been predominantly a clerical movement, inspired with the idea that our religious nature is the essential part of our life and must be explained in terms of the modern mind, but the reform movement in Islám has been little more than the expression of discontent with traditional practice and dogma by westernised Muḥammadans, resulting in a check put upon such things as polygamy, divorce, slavery, and the seclusion of women.

So far as we can gather there has been only one really definite attempt made to bring Islám as a system into the realm of the rational, and that was attempted by Sir Syed Aḥmad Khán, an Indian civil servant, born of a high Muslim family with high principles and remarkable ability. He recognized that the British had done

<sup>1</sup> *Letters to Indian Youth*, p. 231.

much for the enlightenment and betterment of India. He saw that Hindus, by taking advantage of Western education were pushing ahead of the Muḥammadans, so he urged his people to drop their Eastern prejudices and advance along the same progressive way. His community, he said, 'was suffering from a deep-seated disease for which the medicine was English education.' He travelled far, at great inconvenience and in the face of great opposition, to lecture and raise money for establishing an educational institution. In 1878, his scheme was realized in the erection of the Anglo-Muslim College at Aligarh.

He saw that much in Islām was incompatible with modern thought, and he took the bold line of exposing that which was in glaring opposition to reason. For this purpose he started a magazine called *The Muḥammadan Social Reformer*, in which for nine years he wrote articles combating the religious prejudices of his co-religionists against the acquisition of modern science and art, and giving a rationalistic interpretation of Islām. His writings have had much to do with moulding the attitude of educated Muslims in India and other lands ever since. He was greatly hated. The orthodox party knew well that he was undermining the faith, and many swore on the Qur'ān to take his life. Mecca issued *fatvas* against him. The Mullas denounced him as a renegade and a 'lieutenant of the evil one,' and hoped that 'God would destroy him'.

Our special interest is in his attempt to re-shape Islām. Writers had spoken of it as 'a natural religion,' and he adopted that idea as the basis of re-construction, but he carried it too far, so far indeed that for him Islām was

nature and nature was Islám. For this reason he and his followers were called 'Naturists' or 'Nechuris,' that is followers of nature. Now this position involved a new interpretation of the Qur'án, and he found it necessary to write a new history of Islám to show that Muḥammadans had all along misunderstood the teaching of their sacred book. In the spirit of modern secular scholarship he adopted a rationalistic exegesis obliterating the supernatural and rejecting Muḥammad's inspiration and miracles. Prophets were to be accepted only when their message was in conformity with nature and nature's laws. Reason became the standard for everything. He did not see that reason, unaided by revelation, can tell us nothing satisfactory of God, of sin, sorrow or salvation. Sir Syed Aḥmad's movement, although extensive in its influence even to-day, has been too rationalistic to help Muslims spiritually. Its strength lay in social and educational reform.

Islám has found a more subtle apologist for itself in the Rt. Hon. Syed Amír 'Alí, another Indian civil servant, who contends that the 'Spirit of Islám' is something altogether different from the traditional faith of to-day. His position is that polygamy, slavery and concubinage are not of the true spirit of the Faith, but were permitted as temporary measures only.

The progressive Muslims in India, who advocate one or other or both of these theories, are usually deists who have very little sympathy with the forms and ceremonies of their Faith. They have not formed a new sect like the Brahmos have done, with whom there is a strong affinity, but, as individuals, have made known their

views privately. The movement is but a part of a general movement going on in everyl and where Christian laws, customs and religious ideas are replacing those of other faiths. The impact of Western thought on other faiths has always the effect of producing a regeneration. The Hindus are putting their house in order, purging it of everything that will not bear the searchlight of purity, reason and science. The Muslims are following on and neo-Islám is at work on similar lines and we may expect the thing to grow, especially in those vast Muslim communities controlled by Christian governments. The clamour for schools, colleges, universities and political status, all point to the increase of unrest.

How the rank and file will view the reform of the traditional dogma remains to be seen. It may mean another big split in the camp, the reformed section establishing some central authority of modern culture with power to eliminate the objectionable, while the traditionalists will cling to the ignorance and bigotry which have ever been their strong fortress.

It should be clear to every Christian, with these facts before him, that he has a duty to these people. Since it is our civilization that has been the cause of the unrest, we should see to it that we make known the way of peace and rest; since there is an awakening, we should help the people to come to newness of life. Islám needs 'the fresh breath of Jesus.' That expression was used centuries ago by Jalálu'd-Dín a Muslim mystic, who had great veneration for our Lord. He used it of man's heart, but it may be applied equally to Islám:—

And granite man's heart is, till grace intervene.

And, crushing it, clothe the long barren with green.

When the fresh breath of Jesus shall touch the heart's  
core,  
It will live, it will breathe, It will blossom once more.

### NOTE I

#### FOR THEIR SAKES

These are the words of Christ: 'For their sakes I sanctify myself.' We cannot improve upon that attitude of him whom we call Saviour and Lord. We are called to a like consecration. And this applies not merely to the missionary who devotes his whole time to this service, but to every one who has named the name of Christ. Shall we consecrate ourselves on behalf of the Muḥammadans? Surely, a glorious opportunity and sublime privilege is ours as Christians to undo what a bastard church did in the early days of Islám. Plainly it is to give to the Muslim world a true conception of Him who is our Life. We should not approach them in any spirit of superiority or hostility, although it must be made quite clear that there can be no compromise in regard to those vital doctrines which are denied by Islám with such emphasis as to make it the greatest Anti-Christian system of the day.

Study Islám—study it from the standpoint of politics. Germany regards 'the propagation of Islám as an imminent danger to the development' of her colonies. Consider how its social laws may degrade the infant Christian communities just springing up out of heathendom. Remember the pagan tribes that may be brought over into Islám if we do not act.

What we need is the earnest spirit of the crusades. When in A.D. 1200, the high barons of France had

taken the sign of the cross, they sent envoys to the Doge of Venice beseeching him to influence the Venetians to build and man ships for transport and battle. They said: 'Sire, the barons of France, who have taken the sign of the cross, cry to you for mercy, that you take pity on Jerusalem, which is in bondage to the Turks, and that, for God's sake, you help to avenge the shame of Christ Jesus.'

The people were moved to help, and arrangements were made to provide the necessary fleet. When the time came for departure it was felt that many more should enlist 'in the service of God and of Christendom,' so, on a certain Sunday, the Doge, who was 'of a great heart,' though old and blind, went to the Church of St. Mark, and standing at the reading desk, said to the people! 'Signors, you are associated with the most worthy people in the world, and for the highest enterprise ever undertaken; and I am a man, old and feeble, who should have need of rest, and I am sick in body; but I see that no one could command and lead you like myself, who am your lord. If you will consent that I take the sign of the cross to guard and direct you, then shall I go to live or die with the pilgrims.' The people with one voice consented. Then he came down from the reading-desk and 'went before the altar, and knelt upon his knees greatly weeping. And they sewed the cross on to a great cotton hat, which he wore in front, because he wished that all men should see it. And the Venetians began to take the cross in great numbers, a great multitude, for up to that day very few had taken the cross.'

<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Villehardouin and De Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusade*, (Everyman's Library) pp. 4-16

It is a burning enthusiasm like this, for the cause of Christ, that we desire to see in the young men of Christendom to-day. '*Take pity, and help to avenge the shame of Christ!*' These words come ringing down the centuries to us to-day. We have to do with the same people as those old Crusaders had. We retain the same motto '*Deus Vult*'—God wills it; we uphold the same banner, the sign of the cross: but our spirit, our weapons, our methods are different. We rely not upon an arm of flesh; we press forward in the Spirit of Jesus with the Sword of the Spirit. Who will join us in this great spiritual crusade? We do not want back the empty tomb; we are not eager to possess that, for we have the risen, ascended and glorified Lord. With God's help we shall work and pray so that our Lord's name may be a glory in those lands where He is now denied His rightful place. And that name *will* be glorified if all Christians stretch out a helping hand to the 230,000,000 Muslims who have been so misguided.

With God's promises to stay us, Christ's presence to cheer us, and the Holy Spirit to empower us, let us as Christians manifest by lip and by life the living power of the Christ. By this we can all become 'more than conquerors' of Islâm.

## NOTE 2

**TABLE**—showing the territory lost by Islam since 1800.  
Every cession of territory makes more impossible the realization of the Muslim ideal of a church-state.

Date	Country or Province	To whom ceded
1800	Georgia, from Persia ... ..	Russia
1803	Mughal Empire, India ... ..	Great Britain
1813	Darband, Baku, Shirwan from Persia ... ..	Russia
1813	Sovereignty of Caspian Sea from Persia ... ..	Russia
1824	Straits Settlement ... ..	Great Britain
1829	The Circassian Coast from Turkey	Russia
1830	Greece became Independent ...	Greece
1830	Servia from Turkey (Autonomous afterwards Independent) ...	Servia
1830	Sunda Islands, Dutch Rule consolidated ... ..	Holland
1830	Algeria, from Turkey ... ..	France
1839	Aden and Arabian Coast ... ..	Great Britain
1843	Sinde, India ... ..	Great Britain
1844	Kirghiz ... ..	Russia
1849	Panjáb and Kashmir ... ..	Great Britain
1856	Oudh ... ..	Great Britain
1862	Roumania, from Turkey (Autonomous, afterwards Independent) ...	Roumania
1868	Khohand and Bukhára ... ..	Russia
1873	Khiva ... ..	Russia
1876	Baluchistán Protectorate ... ..	Great Britain
1878	Montenegro, from Turkey ... ..	
1878	Bosnia and Herzegovina, from Turkey ... ..	Austria-Hungary
1878	Bulgaria, from Turkey ... ..	Bulgaria
1878	Cyprus... ..	Great Britain
1878	Bessarabia ... ..	Russia
1881	Merv ... ..	Russia
1882	Tunis, from Turkey ... ..	France
1882	Egypt, from Turkey ... ..	Great Britain
1885	East Rumelia, from Turkey ...	Bulgaria
1884-98	Sahára and W. Súdán ... ..	France
1887-89	British East Africa ... ..	Great Britain



Date	Country or Province	To whom ceded
1887-89	German East Africa ... ..	Germany
1890	Zanzibar ... ..	Great Britain
1891	Part of <u>Khurásan</u> , from Persia ...	Russia
1898	Eastern Súdán ... ..	Great Britain
1898	Crete (Autonomous, now striving for annexation to Greece) ...	
1910	Morocco ... ..	France
1911	Tripoli, from Turkey ... ..	Italy
1912	Albania (Autonomous) from Turkey	
1913	Scutari, Novi Bazar and neighbour- hood from Turkey ... ..	
1913	Salonica and neighbourhood ...	

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POLITICAL DIVISION OF THE MUSLIM WORLD  
(Approximate Figures)

Muslims under  
Christian Rulers  
**163 millions**  
(Of these, **92**  
millions are under  
the British flag).

'The Political division  
of the Muslim world is ■  
startling evidence of the  
finger of God in the his-  
tory of the Church, and  
a challenge to our faith,  
because of so many open  
doors in Muslim lands.'

*Zwemer.*

Under Heathen Rulers, **34 millions.**

Under Muslim Rulers, **20 millions.**

Under the Head of Islam,  
or Turkish Rule, **14 millions.**

NOTE 3

IMPORTANT DATES

A.D.

- 570 Birth of Muḥammad.
- 595 Muḥammad married to Khadíja.
- 610 Muḥammad begins Prophetic career.
- 619 Khadíja dies.
- 622 The Hijra, or flight to Madína, from which event the Muslim Calendar began.
- 623 Battle of Badr.
- 624 Battle of Uḥud.
- 630 Mecca captured and Ka'ba cleansed of idolatry.
- 632 Muḥammad died at Madína. Abú Bákr first Khalífa.
- 634 'Umar second Khalífa. Jews and Christians expelled from Arabia.
- 634-640 Conquest of Syria, Persia and Egypt under 'Umar.
- 651-750 Umayyad Khalífas at Damascus.
- 711 Spain invaded at Gibraltar by Tárik. Muḥammadan rule established in Spain and continued till 1492.
- 8th cent. Islám spread to Central Asia and China.
- 732 Battle of Tours. Europe saved.
- 749-1258 The renowned 'Abbáside Khalífas at Bagh-dád.
- 830 The famous apology for Christianity written by al-Kindy.
- 1019 Maḥmúd of Ghazní enters India.
- 1096-1272 The Crusades.

- 1176-1206 Muḥammad Ghorí conquers Bengal.  
 1235-1315 Raymund Lull. Missionary to Muslims.  
 1299 to present time—Turkish or Ottoman Dy-  
 nasty.  
 1527-1707 Mughul Empire in India.  
 1683 Turks defeated before Vienna.  
 1740-1780 Wahhábí reform in Arabia.  
 1757 Battle of Plassy. British Empire in India.  
 1898 Fall of Mahdí. British occupy the Súdán.

## NOTE 4

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